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TRAINING THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE

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Training
The Devotional Life

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Lessons 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 have been written by Professor Weigle; Lessons 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 by Professor Tweedy.

TRAINING
THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE

LESSON I

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

1. Training in worship is an essential element in the religious education of our children. It is not enough that they be taught about God and about the issues of life, nor even that they be trained in Christian ways of living. They must be brought into the presence of God. They must learn to know Him for themselves. They must be helped to seek Him and to find Him, and to experience the joy of His love and grace.

We have always known this; but we have not always planned for it as we might, nor accomplished it as we should. We have too often assumed that instruction is the foundation, if not the whole, of education, both in religion and in other aspects of life. The teaching methods of our schools, both secular and religious, have been primarily, sometimes almost wholly, intellectual. We have thought that if we impart to our children right ideas about God and duty, their practise of love toward God and man will follow as a matter of course.

Our conception of education in general, however, has been changing. Schools have come closer to life and have developed more practical ways of teaching. Laboratory and manual methods, group work and social projects have made them places where children may indeed "learn by doing." And the intellectual education of their pupils

has not suffered thereby, but has gained in scope and zest. The life of the school has become less formal and more real.

The Sunday school has begun to share in this better understanding of the aims and methods of education. Religion too may be best taught by practising it. To *instruction*, therefore, the Sunday school has added *worship* and *service* as essential elements of its educational program. This is not to imply a relative neglect of the intellectual side of its work. The Sunday school of today should afford more thorough instruction than the ungraded school of a generation ago. But its program is more complete. It provides for expression as well as for impression. It seeks definitely and systematically to develop within its pupils the active attitudes and habits of Christian living and Christian worship.

This book deals with the elementary principles of Christian worship, and undertakes to set forth some of the methods whereby children may be trained in such worship, to the upbuilding of their devotional life. It is addressed primarily to Sunday-school teachers, and aims to help them prepare themselves for this aspect of their work. But, just because training in Christian worship is peculiarly a matter in which home and church must unite with the school, it addresses itself quite as directly to parents and to pastors. In no phase of religious education is there more need and larger opportunity for team-work than in this.

2. WHAT IS WORSHIP? It is more than merely thinking about God, or feeling reverent toward Him, or even seeking to do what we believe to be His will. It is a personal approach to God. It is our attempt to express ourselves to Him in whatever ways we deem possible and appropriate. It seeks to communicate to Him our attitudes, to establish intercourse with Him, to enter into as direct

fellowship with Him as we can. The heart of worship is prayer.

This conception of worship may be made clearer by stating explicitly certain of its implications:

(1) In worship God is the object of conscious attention. That is the distinguishing characteristic of worship as contrasted with work. When one works his attention is centered upon his task and upon the means to its accomplishment; when he worships his attention is directed to God.

(2) In worship God is directly addressed. That is the difference between worship and thought. It is important that we think about God and observe His works and ways, and that we arrive at as clear and true convictions concerning Him as we can. But such thinking is not in itself worship. Worship seeks acquaintance with God, not merely knowledge about God. Its language is that of the second person. It does not think or speak of God as *Him;* it addresses God as *Thou.*

(3) Worship engages the whole person. It involves a movement of intellect and will toward God, as well as loving Him and feeling His presence. It is not primarily a matter of emotion. When we approach a friend in intercourse and fellowship, it is with intelligence and goodwill as well as with affection. So with our approach to God. It involves the whole man.

3. THE ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP. It may be objected that worship has been defined too narrowly by thus identifying it with prayer. Does not the public worship of the church, at least, include other elements — hymns, the reading of Scripture, the recital of a creed, sermon, offering, the rite of Baptism, the observance of the Lord's Supper?

These are indeed properly regarded as elements of Christian worship. Yet in all the idea of prayer, as intercourse

with God, is central. The correlate of prayer, our approach to God, is revelation, God's Word to us. And all these elements pertain to one side or the other of that intercourse. They embody either the Word of God to man or an expression of man's attitude toward God.

We shall be helped to understand the whole experience of worship, and the relation of these elements, if we distinguish in it three stages, and undertake to describe separately: (1) Preparation for Worship; (2) the Act of Worship; (3) the Realization of Worship.

4. Preparation for worship. To this stage belong all the means whereby we seek to set our minds upon God and to bring ourselves into the atmosphere of His presence.

(1) Negatively, we withdraw attention from other things. We check the current of habitual ideas and occupations. We shut out the intrusions of sense, that our minds may be free, undistracted, to dwell upon God. We seek environmental conditions that will help, rather than hinder, in this respect.

(2) Positively, we center our attention upon God. We call to mind our fundamental convictions concerning Him. We think over His revelation of Himself in nature and in human history — most of all, in Jesus Christ. We seek to realize His presence and to understand His will. And we take counsel with ourselves concerning our own lives and their relation to Him. We evaluate our desires in the light of His character and purposes. We bring our ideals to the touchstone of their perfect fulfilment in Him.

This thought about God, if not itself worship, is a most important and almost indispensable preparation for worship. "Suitably clad externally, but mentally clogged with a thousand irrelevant thoughts, I go to visit a friend. To be worthy of this friendship I must first cleanse and disenthrall myself by full imaginative recall of that friend's

life and my relation to it."[1] This is even more true of our friendship and intercourse with God.

There is devotional value, then, in whatever means we find helpful to this "imaginative recall" of God, in whatever brings about a clearer knowledge of God and a heightened consciousness of His presence. This is a function, in public worship, of the reading of Scripture, the hearing of a sermon, the singing of hymns, the recital of articles of faith.

(3) Morally, we fit ourselves for worship by all that goes into the upbuilding of character — by forsaking evil desires and wrong deeds, by cleaving to the good, and by patient, unselfish, loving devotion to the service of God and our fellow-men. No man careless in conduct and unfaithful to conscience, cherishing petty indulgences and set upon his own selfish ends, can experience the best in human friendship. How can such a man understand God or find happiness in His presence? He is disqualified for worship, as for any great human service, at a fundamental point. He cannot love aright.

5. THE ACT OF WORSHIP IS PRAYER. One can find no better statement of the nature of prayer than that made by Clement of Alexandria over seventeen hundred years ago: "Prayer is conversation and intercourse with God."[2] It has been almost precisely repeated in our own day by William James, who, at the close of his profoundly suggestive study of "The Varieties of Religious Experience," defines prayer as "every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine."[3]

But how shall one converse with God? Shall we express ourselves to Him in words, as we do to one another? It

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[1] Quoted from Ella Lyman Cabot in R. C. Cabot: *What Men Live By*, p. 281.

[2] Stromata vii, 242 d, translated in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. II, p. 534.

[3] W. James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 464.

is clear that we need not address Him audibly, for "all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," and He is "quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." "There is not a word in my tongue," says the Psalmist, "but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

We need not shape our prayers even mentally into language. They may mean quite as much to us, and carry quite as well to God, without being put into words at all, even within our own minds. We do the larger part of our every-day thinking, as a matter of fact, in terms of other than verbal imagery. A succession of mental pictures passes before the mind's eye, and we discern the facts and relationships involved in these pictures as immediately and directly as we would discern these facts were they concretely present to our physical vision. So it may be with prayer. The intercession that we make for the welfare of a friend, for example, may take the inward form simply of the presentation of a mental picture of that friend in danger or temptation, without our saying within ourselves a word about him; yet that mental picture may clearly mean to us a prayer, and that meaning will be fully intelligible to the God who understands our thoughts.

Worship is, then, a deed of the spirit. Its language is not limited to words, which can at best but imperfectly express the deepest aspirations and affections of the human heart. We may express ourselves to God by any movement toward Him of thought and feeling and will — most of all, by a life dedicated to His service.

It would be a great mistake, however, to conclude that the putting of prayers into words is useless or unimportant. There are two chief reasons why it is of great value. First, because prayers fitly expressed in language, audible or written, have social as well as personal value. We can

help others to pray, and be helped by others, largely because we can put our prayers into words. And this is not a thing to be regarded lightly, if one would gain the full spirit and value of worship. The man who is habitually silent in prayer will more easily slip into narrowness of outlook and selfishness of petition than he who enters, however haltingly, into the fellowship of God's people as they together approach Him.

The second reason why it is profitable to put prayers into words, is that the effort to do so may clarify one's thought and help to keep his attention directed to God. Here again, what is true of all thinking is true of prayer. So long as we think in terms merely of a succession of mental pictures, we may easily beguile ourselves with vague impressions and unclear convictions. But when we undertake to put our thoughts into words, especially if it be for sake of communicating them to another person, we become clear as to just what we really do think. So the expression of prayer in words detains the mind in worship, holds the attention upon God, and helps us to know just what our real aspirations are. Even silent prayer may with advantage be put into inward words. "I rarely allow myself to pray quite silently in secret," said Bishop Moule. "For myself, I find the wanderings of the mind very much limited and controlled by even the faintest audible utterance of thought."[1]

What shall one say to God in prayer? That cannot be determined by rule, any more than can the content of one's intercourse with his friend. Prayer is a personal matter. Each of God's children is free to express himself to his Father, as his situation gives occasion and his spirit prompts.

Yet there are elemental, dominant notes in prayer which

[1] H. C. G. Moule: *All in Christ*, quoted in J. Hastings: *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer*, p. 447.

tend to be universal. Just as certain elements enter naturally into the intercourse of friends or into the fellowship of children with their parents, these are the natural elements of our intercourse with God. They are Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Submission.[1]

(1) *Adoration.* The Lord's Prayer begins with adoration: "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." One's primary impulse, as his mind turns to God, is to bow before Him in reverent awe and affection. It is God's character that impresses us first of all — His majesty, power and holiness, His infinite greatness and His unfathomable love. Contemplating Him, we are lifted out of ourselves, and our hearts go forth in answering affection and in the fervent desire that all the world may know His glory and with us magnify His name.

(2) *Confession.* Yet we have failed Him many times. In light of His character our own frailty stands revealed. We confess to Him our sins, not simply in general but in particular; we repent and ask forgiveness; and we seek His help as we dedicate ourselves to Him in new obedience and press on to that more abundant life which we cannot attain without Him.

(3) *Thanksgiving.* We have had His help all our days. Life itself and every good has come from Him. Our sense of ill-desert but deepens the confident joy with which we contemplate His past and present mercies and look forward to future experiences of His love and care.

(4) *Supplication.* As children to a Father, we bring to Him our wants and desires, knowing that He will grant them if He can, in the light of our own best interest and the highest good of His creation as a whole. The element of

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[1] I owe this analysis of the dominant notes in prayer to instruction received in childhood from my father. I yet remember the mnemonic device which he gave with it: "You can remember it by thinking of the word 'Acts,' spelled with a double S — A C T S S."

Supplication in prayer is conceived by some as divisible into two elements: Petition, what one asks for himself, and Intercession, what he asks for others. The distinction is of doubtful value. Practically, it is almost impossible to make it; theoretically, it but leads to the unnecessary perplexities which some persons feel concerning the value of intercessory prayer. No one who enters wholesomely into the full social relations of our common human life, and who has caught the spirit of the Master, can fail to feel the good of others as a personal desire.

(5) *Submission.* God knows best. All true prayer, therefore, is in the spirit of Jesus: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." This is not submission to the arbitrary decrees of an autocrat. It is simple filial recognition of the love and wisdom of a Father who knows the desires of every other of His children as well as He does our own, and who in the light of His perfect knowledge plans for the highest good of us all. It is loyal enlistment with the Leader of all mankind, the Captain of our salvation.

6. THE REALIZATION OF WORSHIP will be discussed more fully in the last chapter of this book. God takes account of our prayers. He answers them objectively, we believe, by an actual determination of the course of events which may be other than would have seemed to Him best had we not entered into fellowship with Him. He answers them subjectively, by granting us fuller experiences of His presence and sustaining grace.

The fruits of worship are as manifold as life itself, as rich as human experience, and as various as God's creative touch upon it. Worship helps us to know and love Him whom to know is life eternal. It brings insight and vision; it opens the mind to fresh truth and to a new understanding of familiar things. It begets wholeness and sanity. It mobilizes one's resources and gives strength and power.

It makes available the infinite dynamic of God's own Spirit. It issues in unselfish activity and creative human service. Its full realization and its ultimate sanction are in a life that not only is "hid with Christ in God" but goes forth with Christ "not to be ministered unto but to minister."

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it essential that children be given definite training in worship?
2. Is your Sunday school giving such training in an effective way? What makes you think so? If not, why not? Name specific reasons.
3. What is worship as distinguished from (1) thought about God (2) life and work in God's service?
4. Distinguish and characterize three stages in the experience of worship.
5. What are the functions and values of Scripture reading in the experience of worship? Of the singing of hymns? Of the recital of a creed? Of the offering?
6. Do prayers need to be expressed in words? If so, why? If not, why not?
7. Take several examples of forms of prayer, and analyze their dominant notes.
8. Why is submission a vital element in all prayer?
9. Does prayer have objective value in helping to determine the course of physical events? Give full reasons for your answer.
10. Does prayer have subjective value in Christian experience? Give full reasons for your answer.

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LESSON II

TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

I. In the Home

To teach a child to pray is the duty and privilege, in the first place, of the father and mother. A child's religion is rooted in the religious life of the family of which he is a dependent member. His ideas, habits and desires, concerning God as well as concerning things, are derived from the current spirit and practise of his home. And the father and mother should bring this spirit and practise to bear upon the lives of their children in ways not simply of unconscious influence, fundamental and unfailing as that is, but of consciously educative purpose.

In teaching their child to pray the father and mother will make use of five fundamental methods: (1) they will bring the child into the social atmosphere of prayer; (2) they will train him in habits of prayer; (3) they will teach him forms of prayer; (4) they will encourage him to express himself to God in spontaneous prayers; (5) they will instruct him in the meaning of prayer.

1. The social atmosphere of prayer. We teach children to pray by associating them with ourselves as we pray. In many homes, the beginning of family worship dates from the coming of the first child. It is easy, after marriage, for the young husband and wife simply to continue their separate habits of devotion, without adding to these in their daily program the habit of approaching God together. It is a true instinct, in that case, that impels them, when their children begin to grow out of babyhood, to question one another whether the time has not come to establish family worship.

It were best, of course, to have begun earlier. A practise of family worship, begun for sake of the children, is apt to have something of awkwardness and unreality about it, and so to fail. A practise begun, on the other hand, when the new home was first established, has now become natural; no self-consciousness clouds its genuineness or impedes its access to God. The parents have already constituted themselves a family before God. The home is as well prepared in its spiritual habit as in material provision to receive and to nurture the new life that is given into the parents' care.

It is a great mistake, moreover, to suppose that children are not influenced by their social environment until they are able to understand and use language, or that they are not susceptible to religious impressions until they can be instructed about God. On the contrary, it is only because they have been influenced by social environment that they ever pick up language at all; it is only in so far as they have been receiving religious impressions that they can attach meaning to the word "God." "Language has no meaning until rudimental impressions are first begotten in the life of experience, to give it a meaning," wrote Horace Bushnell in that notable chapter on "When and Where Christian Nurture Begins,"[1] which every parent ought to read.

It is natural that the first step in teaching a child to pray should be for the mother to pray for the child, in its presence, as she tucks it in at night. Mrs. Mumford has given so true a description of this first way of bringing the child into the social atmosphere of prayer that we quote it at length:

"The tiny baby, now a few months old, is lying awake in his cradle, ready for his evening sleep: his mother is

[1]Horace Bushnell: *Christian Nurture*, 1916 edition, p. 203.

kneeling beside him, her head reverently bowed, her hand holding his in her warm, soft clasp. She is praying to God — praying that He will care for her baby through the coming night, care for him in the coming years of youth and manhood. The touch of her hand, the sound of her voice, the sight of her face, as she kneels there, from the first, in some dim way, vaguely modify the contents of his little mind — even though, as yet, he can understand nothing of what it all means. Still, as each night she prays; as each night, month after month, this same group of sense impressions has been passively received in his baby brain, invariably registered, then unconsciously analysed and compared, gradually the group, as a whole, stands out in his mind with a certain degree of definiteness. . . . When his mother *prays*, her attitude, her tone of voice, her expression of face, the very touch of her hand, are different from what they are at any other time and under any other circumstances: and to this difference the child instinctively responds. Silently and unconsciously, *her* reverence, *her* love, communicated to him, in some strange and exquisite way, along the chords of human sympathy, call forth in him, almost from the first, feelings akin to her own. What she feels, he, too, begins to feel: and a child is capable of religious feeling, long before he is capable of religious thought."[1]

As the child grows older and enters with increasing intelligence, freedom and good-will into the life of the family and into other social relations, the ways multiply in which, through personal association with others, he may learn to pray. When he is old enough to take prayers upon his own lips, wise parents will kneel with him, that he may pray with them rather than say his prayers to them. In due time, he will have place and part in family worship; he will go with his parents to worship in the church; and he will share in the worship of various social groups of which he finds himself a member.

[1] E. E. R. Mumford: *The Dawn of Religion*, pp. 9–12.

2. Beginning the habit of prayer. Among the many helpful things in Miss Chenery's story "As the Twig is Bent" is the mother's account of the training of her children in religion. It begins thus:

"When Margery was about two, I taught her to say a little prayer and had her repeat it every night on going to bed. 'God bless Margery,' — that was all at first; but I showed her how to kneel, and she understood that the prayer was always to come before lying down for the night. Of course the name God meant nothing to her, and the three words together nothing at all. My only idea was to have her begin to pray so early that it would be second nature to her to say her evening prayer and indeed that she should not be able to recall a time when she did not say it."[1]

This is the second step in teaching children to pray. As soon as a child has learned to talk well enough to frame short sentences, his mother should encourage him to say his own prayer to God, and should furnish him with a brief form of words for that purpose. She thus begins to train the child in the habit of prayer.

It has been objected that this is a mistaken procedure. The child cannot yet understand what he is doing, it is admitted; he knows nothing about God, and has no inward motive for addressing Him. Better wait, therefore, is the counsel of some, until he learns enough about God to want to say something to Him.

The answer to this objection is that the education of children in general begins with doing rather than with understanding. Speaking, reading, writing, figuring, good manners and moral habits — all these they acquire by practise. So they may acquire the habit of prayer, profiting in this as in other things from the experience of older folk who have gone the way of life before them. Their

[1] Susan Chenery: *As the Twig is Bent*, p. 143.

understanding of God will develop in due time, and will be quite as much a result as a condition of their growth in prayer.

3. FORMS OF PRAYER. The form of words in which the child's prayer is cast will at first be determined by the parents, of course. And throughout the whole of childhood, they should continue to furnish him with forms which may fitly serve both to express his present needs and to awake him to new and higher aspirations.

The value of such forms in the education of children is clear. Through them the child enters into his spiritual heritage, and avails himself of the wider experience of his elders. "Lord, teach us to pray," asked the disciples of Jesus; and he answered by giving them a form which has for us, as it had for them, high educative value. The Lord's Prayer did more than put into words aspirations that they already felt; it helped to lift them to higher levels of desire. It was a lesson in motives, in inward spirit and attitude, quite as much as in expression. So parents, who furnish their children from time to time with forms of prayer, not only train them in appropriate ways of expressing themselves to God, but may help them to grow in thought and feeling, to understand more about God and to know Him better.

There are dangers in the use of such forms, be it admitted. A form that is too far beyond the child's present knowledge and desire will lack meaning to him, and may foster insincerity. Forms set upon too low a level may become limitations, prisoning his aspirations instead of setting them free. Repetition may in time empty a form of inward meaning. The child's habit of prayer may become mechanical, his forms of prayer mere forms, without real content of idea or desire.

If these dangers are to be avoided, and forms of prayer

to be of full educative value in the life of a child, two counsels must be carefully observed:

(1) There should be, from time to time, a *revision of the child's forms of prayer*. As he comes to understand more about God and about life, as his powers develop and his interests expand, his growth in prayer should keep pace with the rest of his development. His old prayer-forms should be revised, and new ones furnished him. Better yet, he should be encouraged to devise new forms of prayer for his own use, and to cooperate with his parents in the revision and expansion of the old forms.

(2) Parents should concern themselves with *the child's preparation for worship*, as well as with the act of worship itself. As soon as the child can understand in some measure, the parents should tell him about God, not by way of formal instruction, but in the free intimacy of home conversation and in the happy confidences of the story hour. And instead of simply ordering the child to "say his prayers" when she puts him to bed at night, the mother will take a few moments to talk the day over with him, to anticipate the morrow, and to remind him of God's presence and care. She attempts the impossible if she hurries him through the process of undressing, in an atmosphere of protest rather than of worship, then suddenly commands him to pray.

4. Spontaneous prayers. A natural result of the child's preparation for worship will be that his desire to express himself to God will outrun the forms which have been given him. He will have things of his own to say to God. And the mother should by all means encourage such freedom in prayer. It is the first rudimentary appearance of that inward disposition of mind and heart and will which is the end at which all preliminary training in prayer has aimed. We fail utterly if we do not in time develop

within the child both the impulse and the power to approach God for himself in independent prayer.

The child's spontaneous prayers should at first be in addition to, rather than a substitute for, the forms of prayer which have become his daily habit. They should be really spontaneous, the free and honest expression to God of his own feelings and desires. They will reveal much to the listening mother — odd misconceptions sometimes or quaint strivings of childish desire, and now and then unsuspected depths of feeling and ranges of aspiration.

Increasingly, as the child grows older, his spontaneous prayers will furnish the material for his education in prayer. It is all too easy, of course, for the child to lapse into mere habits of spontaneous petition, and thus to acquire ill-considered and inadequate forms of prayer, whose only virtue is that they rose in the first place from within the child himself. The parents will do all that they can to guard against this, as they guide the child's preparation for worship, and as they talk with him about God and about the meaning of prayer. And they will encourage him to construct forms of prayer for himself that express the really dominant thoughts and desires of his life, rather than the chance aspirations of an hour or a day. They will seek to develop within him, in due time, full responsibility for his life of prayer as for his life of action, and will help him ultimately to become a man who is able to stand upon his own feet before God and to know Him for himself.

5. Instruction in the meaning of prayer. The child's ideas concerning the meaning and value of prayer should not be left to be formed by practise alone. As soon as he begins to express himself in spontaneous prayer, his parents should talk with him, as occasion arises, about prayer itself, and help him to form right ideas concerning it.

The misconceptions of prayer to which a child is most

liable are: (1) to expect immediate answers, granting fulfilment of his wishes, especially for material things; (2) to regard prayer as a sort of magic talisman that wards off harm or as a price paid to God for His protection. There is an old story of a little girl who was reproached by her grandmother for not saying her prayers one evening, and answered: "No, and I didn't say them last night and I won't say them tomorrow night, and then if nothing happens, I'll never say them again." We smile at the little sceptic; yet some of the older folk among us can remember the "prayer gauge" suggested in 1872, when Professor John Tyndall lent his name to a proposal to test the value of prayer by an experiment scarcely more sound or far-reaching than hers.

Happily, the apperceptive basis for a truer understanding of the meaning of prayer lies well within the experience of a little child. Every child who is being brought up in the right sort of home knows what it is to be protected and provided for, not because of any payment that he can make in word or deed, but just because he belongs to a father and mother who love him; and every such child knows what it is to have wishes denied and requests refused because father and mother know best. So it is with all of us, for we are children of God. At bottom, the child's education in prayer depends upon the character of his father and mother and upon the quality of their life in relation to him. The fundamental question to every parent is this: Are you so living that your children may take your love and care and reasonable wisdom as the basis for their beginning to understand their Heavenly Father, and that their love for you and confidence in you may not unworthily serve as the type for their love of God and trust in Him?

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the ways in which parents may bring their child into the social atmosphere of prayer?

2. When and how begin the education of a child in prayer?

3. How early should a child be taught to say his prayers? Why?

4. What is the value of set forms of prayer?

5. What dangers are involved in the use of such forms? How best guard against these dangers?

6. From actual observation or memory, describe some examples of the spontaneous prayers of children. Analyze, if you can, the motives and experiences which underlay them.

7. What do you think of the more or less common practise of telling to visitors, for their entertainment, odd or bright things that children say in their spontaneous prayers?

8. What are some of the ways in which parents may encourage their child to spontaneous prayer, and educate him in it?

9. Children's misconceptions of prayer, and how to meet them.

10. Let some member of the class report upon the "Prayer Gauge" of 1872. See the *Contemporary Review* for July, August and October, 1872, and January and February, 1873, or the volume entitled *The Prayer Gauge Debate*. The proposal was that the whole Christian world should pray, for a period of five years, for the patients in a given hospital, and see whether this united prayer made any difference in the death-rate, as compared with other hospitals and with the mortality tables of insurance companies.

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LESSON III

TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

II. In the School

1. The duty of the Sunday-school teacher to teach children to pray is quite as real as that of parents, however different his opportunity may be. This is for two reasons:

(1) Many children do not receive adequate training in prayer in their homes. It is happily true that teaching the children to say their prayers is in general the very last thing to be given up when a home grows lax in its practises of religious worship. In many homes that have no family prayers, that never give thanks to God for daily bread, and that bear no evidence of the private devotional habits of their older members, parents yet teach their children a form of prayer to be said before going to bed. That such training is far from adequate the last chapter has made clear; but it has some value. There are other homes that lack even this.

(2) Even in the case of those children who are receiving careful training and education in prayer in their homes, the Sunday school has something to do that the home cannot do. It brings the child into the wider fellowship of a worshiping group of children of his own age. And that means much for the expansion and development of his devotional life. It adds a dimension, and infuses a social spirit, that the more private and restricted worship of the family circle can hardly impart.

Any parent who has observed the rapid expansion of the life and development of the mind of a six-year-old child during his first year in public school, understands what is meant by this. The Sunday school ought to render an

analogous service. Dean Hodges has put the matter well in words that apply both to secular and to religious education:

"The child who is taught only by his parents may be better informed, but he lacks the institutional and social spirit which is imparted in a good school. He is in peril of individualism, whose intellectual defect is narrowness, and whose religious defect is selfishness. . . . He may be like a soldier who has learned war by correspondence, and has never kept step with a file of men, nor obeyed the impersonal orders of a captain."[1]

2. THE PROBLEM OF THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER, facing a group of children of whom some are receiving adequate home education in prayer and some are not, may be stated in the words of a successful teacher of Beginners:

"We have in the one case to develop a habit already started, but in the other case to start a habit that may encounter varying degrees of indifference at home. . . . Our problem is *to take the children as they come to us on Sunday from whatever kind of homes* and in the short hour a week *to try to make prayer something more than the repetition of words* we choose to teach them. We want to establish conscious fellowship between our pupils and the Heavenly Father, a relationship that will grow and strengthen as the pupils grow in experience and knowledge."[2]

3. THE METHODS OF THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER are based upon the same principles as those of parents in the home. The teacher, too, will bring his pupils into the social atmosphere of prayer, train them in habits of prayer, teach them forms of prayer, encourage them to spontaneous prayer, and instruct them in the meaning of prayer.

The particular ways, however, in which the teacher may fulfil these principles, are determined by his quite different

[1] George Hodges: *The Training of Children in Religion*, pp 219-220

[2] Mary E. Rankin: *A Course for Beginners in Religious Education*, p. 23. Italics added.

situation and relation to his pupils. He is the leader of a social group which has met for the specific purpose of learning about God and how to do His will. Practically the whole of the group's thought and conversation, concerned as it is with the divine relations of life, constitutes a preparation for worship. And it is but natural that the members of the group should turn from thinking and talking about God to speak to Him, together, in prayer.

What the group wishes to say to God may be expressed in any one of three ways:

(1) *The teacher may lead in prayer*, expressing for the children, as best he can, their aspirations and desires. He may avail himself, for this purpose, of some one of the forms of prayer that have become the rich devotional heritage of the Christian Church; more often, doubtless, the form will be his own, arising out of the present situation, and expressing the immediate needs and aspirations of the group. The great difficulty here, as Professor Hartshorne has well said, is that of really leading, so that all the members of the group will follow. To be able to do this requires preparation, as well as consecration, sympathy and good judgment. The following suggestions of Professor Hartshorne are quite to the point:

"Be short. Be simple. Be concrete. Be direct. Speak from the children's life, not from the adults' theology. Make the children feel that you are really talking with the Father and that they are saying to Him just what you are saying and that He is trying to say something to them."[1]

(2) *The children may pray in unison.* This involves the use of a form of prayer which all have learned. It should, in general, be repeated from memory rather than read.

This method, properly used, has great value. It enlists the active cooperation of every member of the group.

[1] *Religious Education*, October, 1914, p. 446.

The children feel their oneness in prayer; and it seems more real to them than if the leader is the only one to speak aloud.

Forms for this purpose must be provided by the teacher, of course. He will find some that are suitable in prayer-books and liturgies; but he will find it necessary to write out prayers of his own composing, to be used in this way. More than this, he will encourage the children themselves to write forms of prayer for the class to use. Each may bring his suggestions or his own written form, and after discussion and conference a form may be agreed upon which shall serve as the prayer of the class on certain occasions or during a given period. This form, then, all will memorize, that it may be used with freedom when the group desires so to express itself to God. Several such forms may be composed and committed to memory, for use on different occasions. And in the following year, new forms may be written, or the old forms revised.

Especially successful training of this sort has been given in a number of the classes of the Union School of Religion, under the leadership of Professor Hartshorne. Miss Rankin reports the following kindergarten prayer, made up in class from the suggestions of the children themselves:

"Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the springtime, that brings the warm sunshine and the rain, the green grass, flowers and birds. We thank Thee for watching over us. Help us to be kind, and to share with our friends everywhere the good things that Thou hast given to us. Amen."[1]

The following, again, was compiled from ten prayers submitted for this purpose by a class of nine-year-old pupils:

"Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for Thy watchful care over Thy little children. Thou hast given us our homes and our parents, our schools and our teachers, our

[1] M. E. Rankin: *A Course for Beginners in Religious Education*, p. 26.

friends and our plays, and all the wonderful world in which we live.

"Forgive us that we so often forget Thee. We are sorry for our thoughtlessness and our unkindness.

"Give us strong minds that we may think good thoughts; strong wills that we may resist temptation; and hearts ready to help others. May our class ever do its best and may every member of the school live to please Thee."[1]

(3) *The teacher may ask one of the children to lead in prayer.* One way, at first, is to ask the child to lead as all repeat together the Lord's Prayer, or to select some other from the forms which all know and to lead in its repetition. Or he may be asked to prepare a written prayer for use on a given Sunday, which he will read or repeat from memory, the rest of the children remaining silent as he thus voices their common petition. Later, he may be called upon to lead in prayers that are really extemporaneous.

This is a difficult aspect of the teacher's work. There are parents who do not wish their children to be trained to "pray in public." And there are children who are over-eager and voluble, and other children who are bashful and sensitive. There must be no forcing, no undue pressure, no fostering of insincerity, no premature assumption of older ways.

The difficulty is seen to be less great, however, when we remember that this education in prayer takes place within the little, intimate circle of a class group of children, who are being brought into a common understanding of the meaning of prayer and whose lesson material each Sunday may be so taught as to constitute a real apperceptive basis and preparation for prayer. In no other place, save in the home itself, will prayer seem more natural or is it more likely to be sincere.

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[1] *Religious Education*, October, 1914, p. 448.

4. The teacher and the individual pupil. The aim of this social training in prayer is that individual boys and girls may grow to be men and women of genuine devotional life, whose prayers are independent, intelligent, sincere and full of power. The teacher should do all that he can, therefore, to help his pupils in their individual habits of worship. He will assume, in all of his teaching, the existence and propriety of such habits; and he may suggest to the children, from time to time, desirable seasons, topics and forms of prayer for their individual use. Without embarrassing any child by direct questioning in the presence of others, he will learn, through the indirect revelations of class discussion or in moments of personal conversation, something about the prayer-habits of each of his pupils; and he will try to give to each the guidance that he most needs. Often, the teacher will find that parents will welcome his help, especially if he is able to bring to their attention forms of prayer that they can use profitably in the home training of their children.

III. Characteristics of Prayers for Children

We turn now to a brief statement of certain general principles, which should be observed in the construction or selection of prayers for the use of children, or for the use of the parent or teacher who leads children in prayer.

(1) *These prayers should be brief, simple and direct.* No other can hold a child's interest and attention. In general, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty words is enough; even less is often better. There should be no circumlocution or indirection; no elaborate descriptions of the attributes of God or of the condition of men; no scattering of ideas. Better several short prayers, each with one dominant thought, than a combination of too many things in one prayer.

(2) *These prayers should be conceived from the child's standpoint.* They should deal with matters that lie within the circle of his experience; and should give expression to his needs. This principle may be transgressed in either of two ways: by using a form of prayer that is above the level of the child's present experience or one that falls below it. The former is the less serious mistake, unless the prayer be so far beyond the child as to be incomprehensible. But to hold a child to a form of prayer that is below the level of his experience, is to empty his worship of meaning and to make religion petty in his eyes.

(3) *These prayers should be definite and in all respects true.* The mind of a child is concrete, frank and literal. He wants definite things, and he means what he says. It is possible to foster wrong ideas within him by teaching him forms of prayer that are unduly vague or even misleading.

The outstanding example of a form that is misleading in emphasis, even though it is not actually untrue, is the last couplet of the familiar prayer of the old New England Primer:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep.
> I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take."

Such a prayer was perfectly natural in the eighteenth century, when religion concerned itself chiefly with preparing men to die, and even little children were exhorted to think much upon the uncertainty of life. Religion today is more concerned with fitting men to live. And most of us see the wrong of putting into a child's head, night after night, at the hour when he is most open to suggestion, the idea that he may die during the night. With this in view,

there have been many emendations of the last couplet. Two of the best forms are:

(a) Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep
In peace and safety till I wake,
And this I ask for Jesus' sake.
(b) Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
Thy love go with me all the night,
And wake me with the morning light.

(4) *These prayers should be filial in spirit.* They should be such as are natural to a child of God, at home in his Father's world. They should express love, trust, gratitude, loyalty and obedience, rather than fear, doubt, or mere self-interest. Until he is eight years of age, at least, all the child's prayers should be addressed to God the Father rather than to Jesus Christ. Thus confusion will be avoided in his little mind, and he will be helped to carry over to God the same sort of confidence that he has in his earthly parents.

(5) *These prayers should be social in attitude and content.* From the first, children should be taught to pray with others, and to pray for others as well as for themselves. Their prayers should not be allowed to become introspective or self-centered. Their worship should reflect, in a natural and wholesome way, their training in social motives and social living.

(6) *Should forms of prayer for children be cast in rhyme?* The advantage of a poetic form is that it is more easily remembered. The disadvantage is that it lends itself more easily to merely mechanical repetition, especially if its rhythm be pronounced or jingly. Inverted phrases, fanciful figures and other forms of poetic license should be avoided; and the prayer should be no less natural and

straightforward in expression than if it were prose. The temptation must be steadfastly resisted to let the content of the prayer be determined by the necessity of making a rhyme. On the whole, prose forms are apt to be better. We have been uncritically following the fashion if we have assumed that children's prayers ought always to be rhymed.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it necessary that the Sunday school, as well as the home, should teach children to pray?
2. Why, in teaching children to pray, must the Sunday school rely upon instruction and training in the class group, rather than upon mere participation in the worship of the school as a whole?
3. What should be characteristics of the prayer of the older person who leads a group of children in prayer?
4. What are the advantages of encouraging children to write their own forms of prayer for individual or class use? What are the disadvantages?
5. How shall the teacher encourage children to lead in prayer? What are some difficulties? What dangers are to be guarded against?
6. In what ways may the teacher help the individual devotional life of the pupil?
7. How may the teacher help the parents of his pupils in their training of the devotional life of the children?
8. What should be characteristics of forms of prayer for children's use?
9. Is the posture in prayer important in the training of children? Give reasons for your answer.
10. Should forms of prayer for children be rhymed? Give reasons for your answer.

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LESSON IV

WORSHIP IN MUSIC AND SONG

I. The Function of Music in Worship

The thoughtless and flippant attitude taken toward music by many people is amazing. In the home it is an amusement; but they never dream that it may purify the life of the family and vitally affect the characters of the children. In the church it is a pleasure, a means of drawing crowds and of furnishing variety; but that the songs are helping to determine men's ethical ideals and spiritual power never occurs to these people. As to what is sung, and why it is sung, and the results attained, they apparently have no care.

This is more than incompetence. It is irreverence toward God and a wrong to man. *For music is a power.* Scientists have found that major chords tend to accelerate respiration and stimulate the heart, and that the opposite effects are produced by minor melodies. Music may excite or soothe nerves, awaken and express emotions, empower ideas. In many illnesses, mental and physical, it has been found to possess therapeutic value. In reform schools it has proved its efficacy to control and transform the "discordant" child.

But its highest practical efficiency has been reached as an applied art in the service of religion. For worship and music have always been closely associated. It is a long way from the symbolic dance and rude chant of the savage to the Hallelujah Chorus; but the journey is marked by melody from beginning to end. In those periods when religion has flourished best, men have sung most. Without music worship has seemed imperfect if not impossible.

Even *pure music apart from speech* has its gracious ministry. It is full of religious suggestion and inspiration, and one should learn to worship through listening, as Milton did, until it brought all heaven before his sightless eyes. The prelude to public worship, often badly chosen and rarely heeded, is an example. This should help to set the tone and beget the mood of the hour, and so to prepare for the preacher's message. It rids the mind of cluttering particulars, creates receptivity, and by subjecting the congregation to a common experience aids in organizing a discordant crowd into a worshiping unit. In the same way the offertory and postlude may and should be religiously helpful, not mere æsthetic adornments but intrinsic parts of a service of prayer and of praise.

But it is *when associated with words* that music becomes most effective. "Mass singing in camps is a tremendous factor in the elevation of the spirit of the men," said the Chairman of the Committee on Training Camp Activities in 1918. "A singing army is irresistible; and we are sending a singing army to France." "Let me write a people's songs, and whosoever will may write their laws," said an astute student of human nature centuries ago. To make the hymns of the Church is to shape the faith of the Church. In all ages hymns have been the prayers, the spiritual food, the creeds, the weapons of the saints. Missionaries have gone forth as singing evangelists. "By his songs he has conquered us!" cried an angry cardinal as he witnessed the triumphs of Luther. The Wesleyan Revival needed the hymns of Charles as well as the sermons of John; and there is good reason why the names of Moody and Sankey, of Torrey and Alexander, should have been associated in our own time.

II. Hymns

There are three tests for judging the value of hymns in the religious education of children: (1) the character of the poetry; (2) the character of the music; (3) the adaptation of both to use by children.

1. The poetry.

(1) *Hymns should possess literary merit.* Too many popular hymns are mere wretched jingles, faulty in form, and lacking in lyrical quality and poetic beauty. When a boy, trained in the public school to appreciate Shakespeare and Tennyson, is asked in the Sunday school to sing such literary and religious doggerel as

> " I rode in the sky (freely justified I)
> Nor envied Elijah his seat;
> My soul mounted higher in a chariot of fire,
> And the moon it was under my feet,"

his respect for the school and his training in worship are harmed more than they are helped.

(2) *Hymns should be rich in religious values.* If spiritual insight, ethical vitality and emotional power be lacking, the loveliest of lyrics is not fitted for the purposes of worship. Miss Wilbur cites a song from a Sunday-school hymnal of an older day which begins thus:

> " As Robert Raikes walked out one day,
> He saw some little boys at play,
> Upon the holy Sabbath day,
> A-playing, playing, away.
> Then away, away, we can't wait any longer,
> Away to the Sunday school."

As she justly remarks, " this may be an historical statement, but it can hardly be classed as a devotional hymn."[1]

[1] Mary A. Wilbur: *A Child's Religion*, p. 46.

(3) *Hymns should contain true conceptions of God and of our relations to Him.* What thoughts of God and Christ and the atonement will a child have who is asked to sing:

> " Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood,
> Which calmed the frowning face;
> Which sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
> And turned the wrath to grace "?

Such pictures of God are incongruent with the Lord's Prayer and the Twenty-third Psalm.

(4) *Hymns should contain wholesome imagery.* The figures of speech should be vivid and interesting, but they must also be normal and helpful. No doubt such hymns as

> " There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood
> Lose all their guilty stains "

have been used by adults with benefit, though it is open to question whether this was not in spite of the figure rather than on account of it. But to the mind of a child, which is so concrete and literal, such a hymn becomes a kind of riddle, whose religious value is doubtful.

(5) *Hymns should be marked by healthy sentiment.* In too many hymns sentiment becomes sentimentality, and feeling a fever. They are effeminate, full of mystical rapture, the expressions of a patronizing affection for a " gentle Jesus " rather than the virile worship of the hero of the Gospels.

> " Ah, dearest Jesus, I have grown
> Childish with love of thee "

is an extreme example; though the familiar

> " Safe in the arms of Jesus,
> Safe on his gentle breast "

is open to the same charge. Such outpourings no healthy-

minded boy can sing sincerely, and he ought to be protected from them, not forced to play the hypocrite.

(6) *Hymns should be true to life.* To give out in the springtide such a hymn as

> "Lord, what a barren land is this,
> That yields us no supply,
> No cheering fruits, no wholesome trees,
> No streams of living joy,"

is to train our boys and girls to think that while they must never lie in ordinary conversation, it makes no difference whether you mean what you say or not, provided you sing. It has been hard for some of us to forgive the well-meaning people who in our childhood gave out Sunday after Sunday,

> "I want to be an angel,
> And with the angels stand,
> A crown upon my forehead,
> A harp within my hand."

We did not want to be angels. To die and to possess a harp and crown was farthest from our desires. Such pious fibs, melodiously chanted, should have no place among our hymns today.

2. THE MUSIC. The second test of a good hymn is the character of the music. Unfortunately the market is full of cheap, tawdry tunes, possessing few if any musical excellencies, and appealing to the feet rather than to the head. The fact that children love to sing them is no proof of their value for religion. Young people also love to sing, "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." "We have such good singing," various schools report. Good for what? Mere gusto, the physical animation created? Or is it good for religious expression and impression, good for worship? There are four simple tests which may be applied.

(1) *Melody.* Is this simple, lyrical, flowing, with no hard intervals, no unusual strain in the range? E flat is high enough; F is distinctly difficult. "St. Louis" ("O Little Town of Bethlehem") is a familiar example of a good tune.

(2) *Harmony.* This should be simple but telling, rich but not complicated. We are conscious of its power in Dykes' "Nicæa" ("Holy, Holy, Holy"). Attempt to improvise this hymn, playing the base in octaves exclusively on the three main chords, after the fashion of some amateur pianists, and note its impoverishment.

(3) *Rhythm.* This may well be marked and often vigorous, but it should be kept free from all irreverent associations. Rag-time, or its religious equivalent, should be relentlessly barred.

(4) *The relation of the music to the thought.* Is it a fitting incarnation, a proper medium for the idea's expression? Professor Hartshorne notes the fact that you cannot sing "Immortal Love, Forever Full" to "Antioch" ("Joy to the World"). The writer recalls one group of children, who sang with great gusto

> "Come, O come, with your wounded heart,
> Weary and worn and sad,"

to an air admirably adapted to be used as a one-step, but which made any sincere use of the words impossible. In contrast mark how Handel sets "I Know that My Redeemer Liveth." Those clear, soaring notes utter the thought as unmistakably as it is possible for music to clothe it. The strong, solid major chords with which "How Firm a Foundation" opens set our feet musically upon bed-rock. He indeed must be a clod, who does not hear the trumpet call to rise and fight in "Webb," set to "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus," or feel the serene beauty of "Pax Tecum" ("Peace, Perfect Peace"). Much of the output of living

popular composers is good, some of it exceedingly good. But religious educators need to be warned against using the froth and foam of our ephemeral musical literature as well as the irreverent trash in which some publishing houses indulge.

3. CHILDREN'S HYMNS MUST BE GOOD FOR CHILDREN. They should be marked by simplicity. This is not synonymous with inanity. It is as bad to "talk down" to boys and girls in hymns as in sermons. Such foolishness awakens only their humor and disgust. Most of the songs should be objective rather than subjective, adapted to the concreteness with which children think; active rather than passive, inasmuch as their impulse is less to feel than to do; and all reverent, without the stiffness of the Scotch psalter or the heaviness of the German chorale.

Hymns should be graded for the different ages. With the little folk, songs will be used that are pictorial, emphasizing trust and obedience, and dealing with those aspects of life which the little child appreciates and understands. Juniors may well be encouraged to use and memorize the great hymns. Many of these, like "Rock of Ages" and "Abide with Me," are too old for a child and lie beyond his experience. But in the years when memory is most active and tenacious they should be made a part of his heritage. Often, owing to the beauty of the words and the charm of the melody, they become school favorites. But they should be used with abundant aid for their intelligent appreciation. Later in the adolescent years belong the hymns incarnating great ideals of duty and of service, which appeal to the conscience and invigorate the will. In general it is safe to have all over twelve years of age sing together; but whether a particular hymn should be used in any or all departments must be left to the trained judgment of the leader.

III. The Leadership of Worship in Music

1. The superintendent or director of music should be an earnest Christian, gifted with musical taste and religious appreciation, whose presence and manner fit him naturally to lead. He should know the best method of leadership, which does not consist in thrashing the air, shouting and scolding, varied at times by a cutting bit of irony or an ill-timed joke. Periods of training are necessary; but these must never be allowed to interrupt and ruin the service of worship, as they often do.

Some musical knowledge is indispensable for such a leader. He may not be a practised singer; but he should protect the children's voices from strain, understand the classification of hymns, and so use each song as to make it effective. He should be able, also, to teach the great hymns, and to educate the taste of the school, luring it on by gracious and tactful means from low standards, which may have become ingrained and beloved, to the higher and better ones, which will become still more beloved and do the work which music was intended to perform.

A most important matter will be his wisdom in the selection of hymns. Here he must be able to utter and enforce the main thought of the service, maintaining harmony in variety. It is not wise to have all the hymns express the same thought or be of the same character, though the central idea of the service must dominate everything, song and prayer as well as lesson plan. Care should be taken to see that the first hymn is familiar, so that all will be at home in it; attractive, conducing to general participation; fitted to arouse the children's worship, to unify their thoughts and feelings, and to strike the keynote of the service. Quieter hymns may find a place in the body of the service, and others expressing a vigorous

and wholesome reaction to the thought of the hour may be used at the close. It is time that leaders should realize that in an order of service all the laws of psychology, all the instincts and faculties of childhood, are working either for them or against them. The usual musical melange, carelessly selected at the last moment, with no clearly defined purpose, is a confession of weakness which borders on the sinful.

In announcing the hymns a knowledge of the lives of the authors and composers, and of incidents in the life-history of great hymns, will be very useful. Merely to give out the number is a very dull and ineffective method. Not always, but often, some word of help and of inspiration should be spoken, creating interest, intellectual appreciation, and the will to sing.

2. THE PIANIST. Even the best leader will be badly handicapped by a poor pianist. It lies very largely in the power of the accompanist to make or to mar an entire service, to vitalize and beautify or to "execute" and mummify the loveliest of songs. Competency and precision are indispensable. It is impossible to worship with a pianist who persistently plays off the key. But there must also be genuine musical and religious feeling, bringing out the meaning of the words, and rendering "O Sacred Head, now Wounded" and "Onward, Christian Soldiers" in entirely different ways. If an orchestra or choir is used, it should be brought to the same standard of efficiency. Better have one good pianist making melody than ten instrumentalists and vocalists turning "Fling Out the Banner" into bedlam.

3. THE TEACHER'S PART will be by word and example to win the pupil's religious appreciation of what is being sung, to help him to sing it sincerely, and to cooperate intelligently and whole-heartedly with the leader and pianist.

To fail to sing, to look about and whisper, to busy oneself with the collection or lesson papers during a hymn, is gross and costly irreverence. No person, who does these things persistently, should be permitted to teach.

IV. Music in the Bible

It is no mere chance that the Bible is full of music, from Jubal, the father of the art, to the vision in Revelation with which the record ends. It was heard in the Hebrew nation's feasts and festivals. It formed a large part of the temple worship. So marked was its effect, according to the picture of the Chronicler, when the great chorus "lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever: that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God." The Psalms, those most wonderful of hymns, have been the voice of the Church in all ages. Jesus went from the Last Supper to Gethsemane singing. Paul counseled his converts, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." The great symbolic pictures of heaven have ever been filled with music, which is not merely a means of jubilant worship but the incarnation of that harmonious living, that spiritual oneness with Jesus, which makes melody with its heart to the Lord. Such is the ideal and aim of worship in music and song, the making of heaven through the reincarnation of Jesus in the lives of our boys and girls.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Discuss proofs of the power of music. What do you know of its part in the maintenance of morale during the Great War?
2. What are the functions of the prelude to public worship?
3. For sake of space, only such examples have been cited in the text as transgress the principles laid down for the poetry of hymns. Find examples of hymns whose poetry fulfils these principles, giving reasons for your choice in each case.
4. Find examples of hymns which transgress the principles laid down for the music of hymns. Examples which fulfil these principles.
5. Draw up a brief list of hymns specially adapted for use in each of the departments of the Sunday school.
6. Select the hymns for a given order of service, centering about some topic which you will choose. Give reasons for your selections.
7. What can the teacher do to help train the child to worship through music and song?
8. What is the place and function of the home in this training?

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LESSON V

THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF THE BIBLE

1. THE SUPREME VALUE OF THE BIBLE lies in its power to bring men into fellowship with God, and to make them like Him. For this purpose it is incomparably the world's masterpiece.

2. THE BIBLE MUST BE BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON THE LIFE OF THE CHILD — VITALLY RATHER THAN MECHANICALLY. A boy may know the story of every hero in Israel and be able to recite glibly the order of the books, the date of the Divided Kingdom and the names of the twelve apostles. He may be trained to appreciate the literary values of Job and the Psalms. Yet in spite of all this intellectual expertness he may fail utterly to enter into the great spiritual experiences, which the Book was intended to create again as well as to record. The great essential is not that the child should know the Bible as a text-book, good as this is, but that the life of the Bible should take possession of his heart, control his thoughts and deeds, and transform him into the likeness of Christ.

3. TWO ATTITUDES TOWARD THE BIBLE ARE INVOLVED IN THIS TRAINING:

(1) *The intellectual attitude.* It is important that children be trained in the light of, and eventually know, the results of our ripest and most reverent Christian scholarship. The historical origin of the books; their literary character and value; the content and nature of the revelation as absolute or progressive; the relation of the revelation of God in the Book to the revelation of God in the facts and laws disclosed in His world: — all these will help to determine the child's use of the Bible, whether it is easy or

difficult, a custom of his credulous childhood or a permanent possession which his future studies and experiences will enrich rather than destroy.

The child should be trained to be open-minded, coming with no dogmatic presuppositions, and prepared to study the record in the light of all truth with perfect docility. He may well be fearless of truth and for truth. He must be honest, never dodging facts, or juggling with texts, or twisting plain meanings. Doubts are to be faced fearlessly and confidently, and matters which for the present he can neither understand nor use laid quietly to one side until he can. He should read the Book reverently but reasonably, as he reads all great literature. There is no incompatibility between reverence and common sense. He cannot and should not read Esther and Ecclesiastes as he reads Matthew and Colossians; and when he finds Paul urging his followers to be subject to rulers, because "the powers that be are ordained of God," he will not imagine that a Christian, who declines to obey the commands of a brutal official, civil or military, "withstandeth the ordinance of God."

This intellectual approach must ever be kept preliminary and subordinate to the devotional. For the religious power of the Bible, while affected by all facts and theories and interpretations, is entirely dependent upon none. Men of all classes and schools, wise and ignorant, somehow develop Christlikeness and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Through the Bible Phillips Brooks and Jerry McAuley both found salvation. It is perfectly possible to obtain all religious values from the book of Isaiah, whether it be the work of one or of many authors, and from the Parable of the Prodigal, whether it be Jesus' account of a historical event or a story that he told for the purposes of teaching. The Bible belongs, according to De Quincey's famous divi-

sion, less to the literature of knowledge than to the literature of power. In general, for devotional purposes, it is unwise to stress theory, especially when permanent religious values may be jeopardized thereby.

(2) *The devotional attitude.* The child should be trained to come to the Book not so much to fill the mind with facts as to set it thinking, feeling, aspiring, praying. Suggest that he *open it with a prayer*, such as "Blessed Spirit of Truth, guide me into all truth," or "Lord, open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." As thoughts come, ask him to *turn them at once into prayers*, reaching out toward the great Father and Helper with whom he seeks to commune. Whatever the passage, teach him to *look for a personal word from God*, an immediate revelation made through the Book, but as directly and personally as in the experience of Amos and Isaiah.

> "God is not dumb that He should speak no more;
> If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
> And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor."

All should be *read and pondered in the light of the spirit and teaching of Jesus.* Christ revised such statutes as "An eye for an eye," and denounced the spirit which voiced itself in the imprecatory Psalms. Last of all, the child should be encouraged to *read with a view to action.* Thought without action, emotion without expression, are futile. At the end of every passage, the immediate question should be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

4. METHODS OF DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY:

(1) *The child should have the best and most accurate version.* Most scholars agree that this is found in the American Revision. With this at times it will be advisable to use other versions for the sake of advantages in

form and freshness of translation, such as the editions by Moulton, Weymouth, Moffatt and others.

(2) *The time should be the best in the day.* The evening has certain advantages, but the mind is apt to be weary and sleepy. The morning is better. Thousands of Bible readers testify to the help gained by rising early enough to study and to pray, according to the familiar custom of the Morning Watch.

(3) *The readings should be systematic and regular.* Yet they should not be a mere matter of rote, with no wise selection or definite purpose. Compelling children to read the Bible straight through is of very doubtful expediency. A habit to be encouraged is that of reading large portions at a single sitting. Many are surprised to know that of the sixty-six books in the Bible forty-two can be read in one half hour each. One writer estimates that at the rate of one hundred words a minute, which is not fast, Ruth can be read in twenty-five minutes, Ephesians in thirty, Job in less than two hours, and 2 Samuel in three hours and a half. In making selections it is helpful to center them around certain persons, re-living and applying their experiences to our own circumstances and problems; or around topics, such as the rewards of virtue or the meanness of sin.

(4) *Reading the Bible aloud* will be found helpful. As in the case of poetry it is only so that the full beauty and tenderness, the cadence and eloquence, the sympathy and impetuosity of the narrative and dramatic portions are fully felt.

(5) *The child should also be encouraged to memorize selected portions.* These should be true, appealing to his intellect; beautiful, appealing to his feelings; and full of living power, appealing to his will. In this connection the testimony of John Ruskin is interesting. His mother,

rather stern and exacting in her discipline, forced the boy to learn long chapters by heart. As to the result Ruskin writes: "She established my soul in life. . . . And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge — in mathematics, meteorology, and the like — in after life, and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in the property of chapters I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one essential part of my education."

5. THE BIBLE MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF THE CHILD.

(1) *The material varies in its devotional values.* Most important in childhood and adolescence are the life and teachings of Jesus. These present God near to the child as a Father, call forth admiration and awaken penitence, bring him under the spell of the Son of God, who communed with his Father naturally and constantly, and so lead him to follow in the Master's train. Next to the Gospels come the great Psalms. Here are the world's classics in the literature of devotion, and many of them lend themselves naturally to the experiences and needs of a child. After these will come the personal and practical portions of the Epistles, followed by the great chapters in Deuteronomy, the flaming utterances of the prophets, and such narrative portions of both Testaments as best help one to realize the presence and goodness of God. Some selections from the Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature will be useful; but in general these may well be left to maturer years.

(2) *The child's interests and needs vary.* To the Beginner, stories dealing with the home and with God's ways in nature may be told, after the method of the kindergarten. In the Primary department the experiences of school give a wider range, and the child will learn to read for himself passages dealing with the simple truths concerning God and

His ways with men. This training will be broadened during the Junior years, when the child's social instincts begin to expand and he becomes a hero-worshiper. We shall seek then to imbue him with the spirit of moral heroism, and to help him to acquire right habits and to understand the duty and the joy of service. Intermediate pupils are facing personal decision, and their readings should stimulate them to definite consecration to Christ and empower them for effective Christian living. The Seniors' interest will center around practical decisions, clear thinking, the settling of doubts and direct training in various forms of Christian activity. At every stage the material must be on the plane of the child's interests and experiences and desires if it is to be fruitful, rising year by year until he has worked out a satisfactory adjustment to himself, to society and to God.

(3) *The language should be adapted to the child.* For the Beginners the stories will need to be put in the words of the kindergarten. When the children begin to read, there are various volumes of Bible tales told in simple and vivid form, which they will appreciate and understand. As soon as possible, however, the language of the Book itself should be used, in which the revelation finds its matchless literary form.

6. The devotional use of the Bible in the home. Here the custom of the child will depend almost entirely upon the custom of the parents. The living example, good or bad, will be contagious and far more effective than all the exhortations and punishments which parental ingenuity can devise.

Care should be taken to use the Book naturally, free from all superstition and "piosity"; to read it reverently, but simply and joyously, emphasizing the element of pleasure as well as of devotion and instruction; to point out

its literary beauties and practical applications, until the children perceive the varied values in it, and turn to it as the best of all the books on their shelves.

All sorts of helps will be useful — pictures of great paintings, photographs, stories of travel in the Orient; in brief, whatever will make the Book live in the life of a child. It is not enough to place a limp leather volume in the hands of a boy and compel him to read it. The act must be vital and spiritual as well as mechanical.

7. THE TEACHER should do all that he can to inspire and further the devotional use of the Bible by the child and in the life of the home. Parents should be awakened to their duty, be put into touch with the best books, and find inspiration and guidance. In the class the use of the Bible will furnish both impulse and example. Under the teacher's treatment the power and charm of the Book and the religious purpose of the writers will ever be apparent. One great aim will dominate every lesson — the salvation, the making whole, here and now, in body, mind and spirit, of these children. In the light of his devotional use of the Bible all life will become sacramental. God will be seen everywhere at work in His world, and the child will be taught to hear God speaking in our times, not only through the ancient oracles but in his own life, in all truth, in the voice of conscience, in the impulses of love, in the revelations of nature, in the laws of morality, in art, in literature, in music, and above all in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. If such definite and vital contact can be made between this treasure-house of the Word of God and the child's life and world in which the same God is speaking today, the dust and distaste which envelop many a boy's Bible will be removed, and it will become indeed and in truth the Book of all books to him, his chief aid in worship and the guardian and teacher of his soul.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. In what does the devotional value of the Bible lie?
2. In how far and in what respect is a true intellectual attitude toward the Bible and correct knowledge concerning it essential to the experience of its devotional values?
3. What do you understand by the devotional attitude toward the Bible?
4. What have you found to be the best time for your regular daily devotions? Why is it best for you?
5. How should the selection of Bible passages for devotional reading be made? Make a selection for yourself of one month's daily readings and give your reasons for making just this selection.
6. What parts of the Bible have you found to be of the highest devotional value? Why?
7. In what respects may the Bible be graded for the devotional use of children? How early should the child begin to use the Bible itself?
8. What can parents do to further the child's devotional use of the Bible?
9. What can the Sunday-school teacher do?

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LESSON VI

THE MEMORIZATION OF WORSHIP MATERIALS

A great deal of memorizing has been required of children by the Sunday school in times past — much of it unwisely, for it took the place of understanding. In our reaction against the merely memoriter methods of earlier days, we are perhaps in danger of unduly neglecting this aspect of religious education. A thoroughly worked out, graded scheme of memory-work is something very much to be desired, on which, however, only more or less fragmentary work has as yet been done.

It is not our business here to discuss or to attempt to formulate principles for such a general scheme of memory-work. We are concerned simply with training the devotional life. As an element in that training, it is of the highest importance that there be committed to memory a certain body of materials — prayers, hymns, Scripture passages, and the like — which may be used in worship.

1. WHY SHOULD CHILDREN MEMORIZE MATERIALS FOR USE IN WORSHIP?

(1) *Because their worship may thus be made more real and direct.* Having command of the language of worship, they the more readily direct their attention to the Father to whom they are speaking. This is especially true of the social worship of a group of children. All ought to join in the hymns and in some of the prayers for sake of the added reality which children feel in such unison of worship. But if they must fumble over leaves to find a printed prayer in a book, or be directed to look at a spot on the wall where one appears on a blackboard or chart, and then be distracted by the technique of reading it — and it should be

noted that to read aloud together is a more difficult thing, even for adults, than to say together something which all know — their attitude is not as spontaneous and whole-minded, and their worship is apt not to seem to them as real and direct, as is the case when they repeat together a form of prayer which all have made their own. The same thing is true, though less so, of their use of hymns. And certainly some passages of Scripture mean more to a child in worship if he can repeat them than if he must have them read to him.

(2) *Because the memorization of these materials prepares children to share in, to appreciate and to enjoy the public worship of the church.* Most of the material which children will commit to memory in this way is not peculiar to childhood. It forms a part of the devotional heritage of the Christian Church, and, in one form or another, is in constant use wherever Christian people gather for prayer and praise. Knowing these prayers and hymns and Scripture passages, children will feel at home in the church.

(3) *Because this memorized material may remain a permanent possession and constitute a spiritual resource to the end of life.* In manhood and womanhood, they will not be as dependent as others upon external aids to worship. They will carry with them, wherever they go, those Bible passages which they have made a part of themselves. They will be able, in any situation, not only to make melody in their hearts to the Lord, but to raise their voices in familiar hymns of praise. They will not be at a loss for language in which to express their aspirations to God in prayer. They will be men and women, in short, of devotional resource. From a never-failing inner store of materials, precious in association and rich in meaning, they will draw happiness and power for themselves and will bring comfort and inspiration to others.

2. When should these materials be memorized? In childhood, all would agree, and especially in later childhood, from six to fourteen. In these years children take delight in memorizing as they will not later; it seems easier for them, and their memories appear to be more retentive.

In making this statement, however, we must be careful not to draw the conclusion that children really have better memories than adults. The trend of experimental investigation in late years has been to throw doubt upon the truth of this common opinion. "The same tests have been put to young children, school children and boys and girls up to the age of twenty, and these show that the older the learner, up to these limits at least, the quicker he learns and the better he remembers."[1] And in those cases where a group of adults has submitted to these tests, they have done better than any of the younger age-groups. It has been clearly established that adults have better immediate memory than children; it is possible, however, that the retentive power of children (their ability to keep for a long time what they learn) is greater than that of adults, though this is hard either to prove or disprove.

Still it is true that childhood is preeminently the time for memorizing. Children are interested in it as adults are not; they are in many respects more plastic; they are not involved in the multitude of other occupations and interests which engage older folk; and their higher mental powers have not yet developed sufficiently to assume that place of precedence over memory that these will take in later life. Memory develops very rapidly throughout childhood, until the age of thirteen or fourteen, then more slowly; while reasoning power develops most rapidly in the teens and early twenties.

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[1] H. J. Watt: *The Economy and Training of Memory*, p. 29.

3. WHAT MATERIALS SHOULD BE MEMORIZED? Principles for the selection of materials to be memorized have been indicated in the statement of reasons for such memorization. It should be material (a) which is actually used by the children in worship, (b) which prepares them to share in and to appreciate the worship of the church, and (c) which ought to remain in memory as a permanent spiritual resource. There is much material which fulfils all three of these functions; some, which is of little immediate service in the worship of the children, may yet be included for sake of its value in the light of the second and third principles.

(1) *Scripture passages.* The memorization of Scripture should not be limited to single verses or "golden texts," however valuable these may be. These are committed easily, but forgotten readily, and do not acquire associative connections enough to insure their being recalled when needed. Children should be encouraged to memorize whole passages as well as single verses; and passages for this purpose should be carefully selected with a view to their devotional value. The following list of such passages is suggestive:

Ex. 20 : 3–17 The Ten Commandments
Num. 6 : 24–26 The Aaronic benediction
Deut. 6 : 4–9 Hear, O Israel
Psalm 1 Blessed is the man
Psalm 19 The heavens declare
Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd
Psalm 24 The earth is the Lord's
Psalm 46 God is our refuge
Psalm 51 : 1–3, 10–12, 15–17 Have mercy upon me
Psalm 84 How amiable are thy tabernacles
Psalm 90 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place
Psalm 91 He that dwelleth in the secret place
Psalm 95 : 1–7a Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord

Psalm 96 Oh sing unto the Lord a new song
Psalm 100 Make a joyful noise unto the Lord
Psalm 103 Bless the Lord, O my soul
Psalm 119 : 9–11 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way
Psalm 121 I will lift up mine eyes
Psalm 139 : 1–12, 17–18, 23–24 O Lord, thou hast searched me
Psalm 145 I will extol thee, my God, O King
Isa. 9 : 6–7 Unto us a child is born
Isa. 40 : 3–14, 28–31 The voice of him that crieth
Isa. 53 : 1–6 Who hath believed our report?
Isa. 55 : 1–11 Ho, every one that thirsteth
Isa. 61 : 1–3 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me
Micah 6 : 6–8 Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?
Matt. 5 : 1–16 The Beatitudes
Matt. 5 : 43–48 Be ye therefore perfect
Matt. 6 : 9–13 The Lord's Prayer
Matt. 7 : 7–11 Ask, and it shall be given you
Matt. 7 : 21–29 Not every one that saith
Matt. 11 : 28–30 Come unto me, all ye that labor
Matt. 25 : 31–46 When the Son of man shall come
Matt. 28 : 18–20 Go ye therefore, and teach
Mark 8 : 34–37 Take up his cross and follow me
Mark 10 : 35–45 Not to be ministered unto, but to minister
Luke 1 : 46–53 My soul doth magnify the Lord
Luke 2 : 29–32 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant
Luke 10 : 25–37 The good Samaritan
Luke 12 : 13–31 The life is more than meat
Luke 15 : 11–24 The prodigal son
Luke 18 : 9–14 The Pharisee and the publican
John 3 : 14–17 God so loved the world
John 6 : 35, 37–40 The bread of life
John 10 : 1–16 The good shepherd
John 14 : 1–14 Let not your heart be troubled
John 15 : 1–8 I am the vine, ye are the branches
Acts 10 : 34–35 God is no respecter of persons
Acts 17 : 22–31 Paul's speech at Athens
Rom. 8 : 1–4, 14–17 There is therefore now no condemnation
Rom. 8 : 31–35, 37–39 If God is for us, who is against us?
Rom. 12 A living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God
I Cor. 11 : 23–28 The Lord's Supper

I Cor. 13 The psalm of love
I Cor. 15 : 35–44, 53–58 The resurrection of the dead
II Cor. 4 : 16–18 Outward and inward; temporal and eternal
Gal. 5 : 22 to 6 : 9 The fruit of the Spirit
Eph. 3 : 14–19 For this cause I bow my knees
Eph. 4 : 1–6 The unity of the Spirit
Eph. 6 : 10–18 Be strong in the Lord
Phil. 2 : 3–11 Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus
Phil. 3 : 13–14 This one thing I do
Phil. 4 : 4–8 Rejoice in the Lord alway
I Thess 5 : 15–23 See that none render evil for evil
II Tim. 3 : 14–17 Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned
II Tim. 4 : 6–8 I have fought a good fight
Heb. 4 : 12–16 Tempted like as we are
Heb. 11 : 1–10, 32 to 12 : 2 The psalm of faith
James 1 : 22–27 Doers of the word
II Pet. 1 : 5–11 Christian character-building
I John 3 : 1–3 Behold what manner of love
I John 4 : 7–11 God is love
Rev. 3 : 11–12 Behold, I come quickly
Rev. 3 : 20–21 Behold, I stand at the door and knock
Rev. 7 : 9–17 A great multitude standing before the throne
Rev. 21 : 1–5, 22 to 22 : 5 The holy city, new Jerusalem

(2) *Hymns.* No type of material is more easily memorized than songs. Children just pick them up by singing them; and a very little effort, wisely expended, avails to make their possession of these both permanent and accurate. But these should be songs worth keeping. The following list will suggest types of hymns that may be used by children in worship and are well worth their learning by heart. Hymns for little children in the Primary Department are not included.

When Morning Gilds the Skies (Laudes Domini)
Now the Day is Over (Twilight)
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty (Nicæa)
Come, Thou Almighty King (Italian Hymn)

O Worship the King, All-glorious Above (Lyons)
This is My Father's World (Diademata)
My God, I Thank Thee, Who Hast Made (Wentworth)
The King of Love My Shepherd is (Dominus Regit Me)
Father, Lead Me Day by Day (St. Bees)
O Come, All Ye Faithful (Adeste Fideles)
It Came upon the Midnight Clear (Carol)
Silent Night (Silent Night)
O Little Town of Bethlehem (St. Louis)
Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne (Margaret)
Joy to the World (Antioch)
I Think When I Read that Sweet Story of Old (Sweet Story)
O Master Workman of the Race (Materna)
Shepherd of Tender Youth (Kirby Bedon)
My Faith Looks up to Thee (Olivet)
Jesus, Lover of My Soul (Martyn or Hollingside)
In the Cross of Christ I Glory (Rathbun)
The Day of Resurrection (Lancashire, in key of D)
Light of the World, We Hail Thee (Salve Domine)
Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me (Pilot)
Immortal Love, Forever Full (Serenity)
Who is on the Lord's Side (Armageddon)
The Son of God Goes Forth to War (All Saints No. 2)
Onward, Christian Soldiers (St. Gertrude)
Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus (Webb)
Take My Life and Let It Be (Messiah or Hollingside)
O Jesus, I have Promised (Angel's Story)
Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us (Bradbury)
Dear Lord and Father of Mankind (Whittier)
Nearer, My God, to Thee (Bethany)
Yield Not to Temptation (Palmer)
Who Would not Love the Bible (Angel's Story)
Break Thou the Bread of Life (Bread of Life)
Come, Ye Thankful People, Come (St. George's Windsor)
O Beautiful for Spacious Skies (America the Beautiful)
My Country, 'Tis of Thee (America)
Fling Out the Banner (Waltham)
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (Coronation)
From Greenland's Icy Mountains (Missionary Hymn)
We've a Story to Tell to the Nations (Message)

(3) *Prayers and the elements of ritual.* The memorization of forms of prayer, for both individual and social use, has been discussed in the second and third chapters of this book. If other elements of ritual enter into children's worship, these likewise should in general be committed to memory.

This is not the place to discuss the value of ritual in Christian worship. Churches, as well as individuals, differ, temperamentally and habitually, in the significance that they attach to forms and ceremonies, postures and symbolic acts. But whatever our grown-up views, it is inevitable that something of ritual be involved in the religious education of our children. A child is associated with older folk in a life which he can but partly understand; he imitates postures, intonations and actions long before he can grasp their full meaning; he loves repetition; he is dramatic, imaginative, emotional. In most of his early education, his doing and feeling go before and prepare the way for his understanding. So with his education in religion. He will acquire habits of life and worship, feelings of reverence and forms of devotion, before he can establish their logical basis in adequate ideas.

Any ritual, however simple, that involves responses on the part of the children, spoken or sung, or unison prayer, will in general fall short of full effectiveness if these must be read. If the public worship of the church contains such ritual elements, children may be encouraged to memorize these in order to equip themselves to take part in it.

Many churches which in worship profess a formal creed, require children to memorize this in connection with their reception into full church-membership, if not before. In this, they follow a practise which can be traced back to the second century. If such memorization means the dogmatic imprisonment of the child's mind, it is most unwise;

but if it is to equip the child to share with his elders in an affirmation of faith and loyalty — which was the meaning of the recital of a creed in the early Church, and should be its meaning today — it is both reasonable and proper.

Churches which profess no formal creed, as well as those which do, may well encourage children to memorize the covenant which they assume when they take upon themselves the vows of discipleship and join the church. The life of many a church would be strengthened and deepened, if all its members knew by heart, and from time to time recalled, the terms of their covenant, the vows taken in Christian Baptism, and the words of the Master associated with the institution of the Lord's Supper. For these are the elements of ritual that are most important to any church.

4. The grading of memory materials. These materials should be graded as carefully as possible, with a view to the child's ability to understand them. They should be memorized, moreover, in as close correlation with the lesson-material which he is studying as is practicable. By all means, of course, their memorization must be correlated with their actual use in the children's worship. It is a mistake to maintain that a child should commit nothing that he does not comprehend, for the full meaning of many verses can be realized only in later life. But certainly he should never memorize anything that he cannot in some measure understand. The present meaning and emotional setting of any memorized material largely determines its permanence and future value.

No attempt has been made to divide into grades the material contained in the lists given above, for two reasons: because the problem of just what should be memorized in a given year involves so many conditions that are local — the development of the children, the content of their

lesson material, and their opportunities for worship; and because the great part of this memorization will be done in the Junior and Intermediate departments. All of the hymns and almost all of the Scripture passages cited are adapted for use in the Junior department. Those that may be learned by younger children will be readily picked out by the Primary teacher.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why should children memorize materials for use in worship? If you feel that they should not, give your reasons.
2. In what senses is childhood the best time for memorizing?
3. Give examples, if you can, of the results of memorizing without understanding what was being memorized.
4. Give examples, if you can, of how memorization with partial understanding prepares the way for later full understanding and realization.
5. Prepare, as for actual use in your own class or school, a list of Scripture passages for memorization. Criticise and evaluate the list given in the chapter, add to it and take from it, and grade it for the several departments. Give reasons for all that you do.
6. Prepare, in like manner, a list of hymns for memorization.
7. Should a child memorize the church's creed, provided it professes one in worship? Give reasons for your answer.
8. Should a child memorize the covenant entered into upon becoming a full member of the church? Give reasons for your answer.
9. Why should the vows taken in Christian Baptism be memorized? The words associated with the institution of the Lord's Supper?

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LESSON VII

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

1. The term CHURCH SCHOOL is coming to be used widely as a name for all of the organizations and agencies within a local church, whereby it seeks to promote the religious life and growth of its children and young people and to train its adult members for effective service. The church school, so conceived, includes the Sunday school, the young people's society, teacher-training classes and classes in preparation for church membership, as well as such organizations as the Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, King's Daughters, mission bands, and the like.

It is not our business here to discuss the organization of a church school. Its details may differ widely, depending upon the local situation. Whatever precise form the organization may take, the term church school stands for more than the mere addition of a new name. It betokens the church's assumption of a new responsibility, and its recognition of three principles that are fundamental:

(1) That all of the organizations which a church maintains for its children and young people, or permits in its name to be brought to bear upon them, are educative in character; and the efficiency or non-efficiency of each is to be judged finally by its educational effect upon the moral and religious life of the children and young people it touches. This is true, however little of instruction the organization may undertake, and however completely its program may be one of activities.

(2) That the work of these organizations should be so coordinated and correlated that each will take its place within an educational program which is unified, consistent

and complete. This program should contain definite provision for the religious education of children and young people of every age, and for both instruction and activity, impression and expression, at every stage of the process.

(3) That the church itself is responsible for the conception and administration of this educational program.

In the training of the devotional life the church school can do three things that are of great value: (1) it can afford to children the experience of worship under controlled conditions; (2) it can give them instruction and drill in the elements of worship; (3) it can offer them opportunities for the expression in word and deed of the attitudes developed in worship, and train them in such expression.

2. The church school should afford to children THE EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP UNDER CONDITIONS THAT ARE CONTROLLED BY AN EDUCATIVE PURPOSE. The worship of the church school differs from that of the family and of the church, in that its primary aim is the education of children in worship, and all the elements of its devotional program should be definitely planned with this in view. This principle applies to the worship of all the organizations and groups, however varied, that go to make up the church school. Its most important application is to the worship of the Sunday school.

The Sunday school ought to include, at some point in the program of each session, a brief service of worship, carefully planned to bring its pupils into fellowship with God and to train and develop their power to worship. Too many Sunday schools have failed at this point. "Our whole session is worshipful," the superintendent of such a school will often say, meaning that hymns and prayers and exhortations are scattered all through it and that becoming order is maintained; but his use of the adjective shows that he does not fully understand what worship means.

The period devoted to this service should be kept absolutely free from all distracting elements. It should not be broken into by announcements or reports, questions addressed to the pupils, the practise of hymns or drill upon memory material, talks about the lesson, "remarks" by visitors, exhortations to attendance or benevolence, or anything else of this sort. All of these things may have their place; many of them certainly do. But their place is not in the period during which the school seeks to afford to its pupils the experience of worship, under conditions that will most effectively train them to approach God.

The program of a Sunday-school session falls naturally into three great divisions: (a) the period or periods for *general instruction*, drill, announcements, and all other matters which concern the school or department as a whole; (b) the service of *worship;* (c) the period or periods of *class instruction* and training. These should be kept distinct, and not allowed to interrupt one another.

The time for the service of worship should be at that point in the session which experience proves to be most practicable and helpful. If put at the beginning, it gives a right start to the whole session. But tardy pupils either will interrupt or must be shut out; and too often the impressions of the period of worship are dissipated before the classes take up the lesson. If put at the end, it constitutes the climax of the day's work, and sends the pupils away with the benediction of its influence. But its influence is lacking throughout the class period, where it is much needed, and the service itself is apt to be scamped or to lack something of wholeheartedness in the atmosphere of getting ready to go home.

Another natural place for the service of worship is just before the classes separate for the teaching of the lesson. On this plan the session begins with a hymn

and a brief prayer of invocation, then proceeds to the period of general instruction, after which comes the service of worship, and then the class instruction.

The program for this service of worship should be simple and brief, yet planned with the utmost care. The essential elements are four: hymn, Scripture, prayer and offering. But over and above the actual content of these elements, in whatever order put and however enriched, the leader should foresee and plan even minor details of procedure in such fashion that every aspect of the situation may reinforce and contribute to the spirit of worship. A short prelude, reverent in character; a sentence sung by the choir in call to worship; or the use of a processional hymn may help to determine the atmosphere. The numbers of the hymns, psalms, and prayers which are to be used should be posted upon a hymn-board that all may see, and the pupils should be given opportunity to find these before the service begins. There need be no announcement of items or numbers, then, to interrupt the natural spirit and sequence of the worship itself. A brief ritual is a help provided all learn it by heart. It is confusing to find and follow a different "responsive service" each Sunday. New forms should be used from time to time, but each should be mastered so that it may serve rather than impede the expression of the attitudes of worship. In general, the worship programs of the Sunday school have given too large a place to responsive reading, the devotional value of which is doubtful. Reading in unison is better.

The offering should be treated as a part of the pupils' worship of God. One school has a moment set apart in the period for general instruction, when the attendance is taken and the members of each class place their offerings in the class envelope. Then, at the proper point in the

service of worship, the school deacons gather the offering as quietly and reverently as do those of any church, and bring it forward to be placed before God while all rise and sing an appropriate sentence of dedication.

The service of worship should be graded for the several departments. The Beginners' and Primary departments, of course, should have their separate worship; and most schools that have tried it, are convinced that the Juniors should worship by themselves. The common practise is to have all above the Junior department worship together; but here, too, there is much to be said in favor of having the Intermediate and Senior pupils worship by departments. While it is true that young and old should have the experience of worshiping together, the public worship of the church affords that opportunity. In the church school we shall do best to fit the experiences of worship as precisely as we can to the needs of the pupils. Many schools whose departments meet thus separately have all meet together, in one assembly and service of worship, once a month.

The following are typical programs for the several departments:

(a) *Beginners' Department*

1. Quiet Music.
2. Offering, with Prayer.
3. Greeting, with Song.
4. Hymn.
5. Prayer.
6. Circle Talk.
7. Rest Period.
8. Table Period.
9. Story Period.
10. Good-bye Song.
11. Closing Prayer.
12. Distribution of Folders or Letters to Parents.
13. Music.

(b) *Primary Department*

1. Opening Service.
   (1) Quiet music.
   (2) Greeting, with Song.
   (3) Unison Prayer.
   (4) Prayer Song.
2. First Class Period, for memory drill or for the retelling of stories.
3. Fellowship Period (birthdays, new pupils, drill of department as a whole upon memory material, new songs, etc.).
4. Service of Worship.
   (1) Call to worship, with quiet music.
   (2) Scripture, repeated in unison.
   (3) Hymn.
   (4) Offering.
   (5) Prayer.
5. Second Class Period, for instruction and handwork.
6. Closing exercises.
   (1) Song.
   (2) Prayer.
   (3) Music.

(c) *Junior Department* (Topic: Loyalty)

1. Hymn: "Come, Thou Almighty King." The children rise to sing, and remain standing to recite from memory
2. Psalm 100: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands."
3. The Lord's Prayer. The children are then seated during the
4. Memory Drill, conducted by the superintendent.
5. Announcements and Reports.
6. Service of Worship.
   (1) Call to worship, with quiet music or response by the choir.
   (2) Scripture, read in unison or repeated from memory: Psalm 27.
   (3) Hymn: "Lead On, O King Eternal." The children rise to sing, and remain standing to repeat the
   (4) Unison Prayer.
   (5) Story: "A faithful soldier of Christ."
   (6) Leader's Prayer
   (7) Offering.
   (8) Hymn: "O Jesus, I have Promised."
7. Class Period for instruction and handwork.
8. Closing exercises.
   (1) Hymn: "Fling Out the Banner"
   (2) Prayer and Benediction.

(d) The program for the *Intermediate Department* does not differ materially, in point of order, from that for the Junior Department. The difference is rather in the content of the worship materials, and in the directly evangelistic aim which should inspire all that is done in this department. The leader's talk need not always take the story form, as it naturally does in the department below this.

(e) The program for the *Senior Department* differs from those of the Junior and Intermediate Departments in two chief respects: the lessening of emphasis upon memory work, and the handing over of the actual conduct of the service, as far as possible, to the boys and girls themselves. The *Young People's Department* should seek yet more fully to develop within its pupils initiative and responsibility in the planning and conducting of their own worship.

Excellent work in this field has been done by Professor Hartshorne, whose books present a wealth of concrete suggestion, based upon his experience as Principal of the Union School of Religion. He puts the service of worship at the beginning of the session, has the whole school worship together, and has the pupils march for this purpose, singing a processional hymn, to the chapel of the Seminary — which is equivalent, under ordinary conditions, to using the auditorium of the church with its organ and worshipful environment. The service lasts from twenty to twenty-five minutes, is organized about one of the fundamental Christian attitudes as a central theme, and includes a story or talk by the leader. The following is a typical program, the theme being Gratitude:

1. Processional Hymn: "Rejoice, ye pure in heart."
   The school enters and remains standing as the leader says: "Let us pray." Then follows
2. The Lord's Prayer, the choir singing the Amen.
   Still standing, the school then sings, without announcement
3. The Doxology. (Only the first line need be played)
   The school is then seated and bowed during the
4. Sentence by the choir, sung softly:

"The Lord is in His holy temple
Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

The school continues with heads bowed, and the leader says: "Let us pray." Then follows

5. The Unison Prayer (repeated from memory, the choir singing the Amen)
6. Hymn: "We plough the fields and scatter."
7. Story: "What Bradley Owed." At the close of the story the leader says, "Let us pray." Then follows
8. The Leader's Prayer, the choir singing the Amen.
9. Recessional Hymn: "For the beauty of the earth."

3. The church school should afford to children INSTRUCTION IN THE MEANING OF WORSHIP AND DRILL IN ITS ELEMENTS. We have already discussed this in the chapters on Teaching Children to Pray and the Memorization of Worship Materials. Let it be added here simply that such instruction and drill may be the work, in one respect or another, of any or all of the organizations and groups that constitute the church school. In the Sunday school it will be accomplished in part by general drill of the school or department as a whole, in part by the teachers in their respective classes, and in part by the individual work of the pupils, mastering materials for themselves under the guidance and inspiration of the teachers.

This is not the place to discuss methods of drill. We state briefly, however, four principles of memorization which have been established by modern experimental investigation.

(1) Learning by wholes is easier and more economical than learning by parts, unless the matter presents special difficulties. "In learning familiar matter of moderate length, read through the whole piece repeatedly till it is learned. Do not learn little by little or verse by verse."

(2) It is better to distribute one's efforts to memorize a given passage over several periods of application, than to

attempt to learn it all at once. It is more economical to learn several things simultaneously, by this method of distributed applications, than to have only one piece of memory work on hand at a time, and to finish it up before beginning another.

(3) Recall is a most effective method of memorizing. After going over the material a certain number of times, one should shut the book and repeat it from memory. But it is a mistake to do this too soon, for it may result in the formation of wrong associations, which are then hard to get rid of. "Do not try to recall from memory at all until you feel little doubt that it will be quite successful. During the first recall consult the text at once when doubts arise."

(4) Materials should be learned in the way that we expect to use them. A prayer that is to be repeated in unison with others should be memorized by repeating it rather than by writing it. Hymns should be learned by singing rather than by saying them over.

It is not difficult for the Sunday school to fulfil these principles. A hymn may be memorized, for example, by simply singing it over as a whole several times on each of several consecutive Sundays, until the leader is reasonably sure that it is safe to try the method of recall, when he has the school sing it without the book. That effort will reveal to each pupil the places on which he needs special study, and in this the teacher should help him. The school will keep on singing it for several Sundays more, and then the pupils will know it. During the same Sundays, moreover, the school may be learning, in the same way, other hymns, a prayer, or Scripture passages.

4. The church school should afford to children OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESSION, BOTH IN WORD AND DEED, of the attitudes engendered in worship, and train them in

such expression. Christian *testimony* and Christian *service* are natural consequences of Christian worship. Through these we express to others the attitudes which in prayer we express to God. To train in testimony and service is the primary function of the various societies and clubs for children and young people which the church school associates with the Sunday school. As children grow older, these active aspects of the Christian life become increasingly important, and assume a correspondingly larger place in the church's educational program. But they should never, from early childhood, be absent.

A child, of course, is unable to relate his Christian experience after the fashion of some older folk. But he is able, even in the kindergarten, to be trained to salute his country's flag and to pledge allegiance to the nation for which it stands; and he is likewise able to be trained to express in words his gratitude and loyalty to God. There is no age at which one may not acceptably, in the measure of his ability and understanding, "speak a good word for Jesus Christ." We all have need of a larger, more natural and objective, less introspective and selfish conception of Christian testimony.

But the expression in words of Christian attitudes is not enough. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." No conviction is really our own until it has been "felt upon our pulses," as Keats said, and worked out in action. This is as true of children as of older folk. The instruction and worship of the church school will fall short of their full purpose unless they are supplemented by a program of Christian living and Christian service. We dare not leave the expression in action of what we teach to chance opportunity. The church school, through some one of its

agencies, should see to it that children are afforded opportunities to love, to give and to do — in short, to share in the various interests and enterprises of Christian living as well as to be taught Christian beliefs.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. What do you understand by the church school? What is the relation of the Sunday school to the church school?

2. What part may the various organizations that make up the church school have in training the devotional life of children? Make your answer as specific for each organization as you can.

3. Do you have a service of worship in your Sunday school? Go over its program in light of the suggestions of this chapter to see whether it could be bettered in any way. If you can add suggestions better than those given in the chapter, do so, justifying them with reasons.

4. Should the various departments of the Sunday school worship together, or separately? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Is it practicable in your school to make the offering a part of the service of worship? If so, devise a plan for doing this.

6. Should the service of worship in the Sunday school include a talk or story by the leader? Give reasons for your answer.

7. What practically can your school do to instruct and drill its pupils in the elements of worship? Devise a program for this.

8. What provision does your church school make for the expression of Christian attitudes in the activities of the pupil?

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LESSON VIII

FAMILY WORSHIP

Family worship is the beginning of social religion. The father was the first priest, the hearth the first altar, the mother and children the first worshiping congregation, and the structure which sheltered them the first church. The home is the world's Holy of Holies. In the nurture and expression of true religion its place is primary and unique.

1. FAMILY WORSHIP IS ESSENTIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE AND PROPAGATION OF RELIGION. There is no substitute for it. The popular attempt to relegate worship to the church and Sunday school is both foolish and disastrous. It impoverishes the religious life of the child. He needs the daily training and example. It starves the soul of the grown-up. On the busy days, when he most needs spiritual food and exercise and upbuilding, he goes to his tasks and trials and temptations without that social expression of religion, which clarifies and invigorates his ideals, and equips him for the demands of the day. It maims the home. Few things, if any, will so unify the life of the family, incarnating the common praise and penitence and good-will; so purify and sweeten the family intercourse, curbing tempers, encouraging unselfishness, inspiring service, and bringing forth the fruits of that Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, meekness, faithfulness and self-control, as worship in the home. Finally, the limiting of religious teaching to the Sunday school tends to make the worship of the church and Sunday school unnatural and difficult. This is especially true in the case of children. If they worship in the home, the act will be simple, natural, intelligible, playing a practical and

interesting part in real life. If worship is confined solely to the exercises of Sunday, they will not feel at home in it or be impressed by the power of it. On the contrary, they will be inclined to view it as a bit queer, something unreal and mysterious, a tedious and unintelligible preliminary to be endured patiently, not a wholesome and joyous exercise in which to find illumination and strength. Probably no church was so important to Philemon, or to his children and dependents, as the one which Paul mentions in his epistle, " the church in thy house." The same is true of family churches in the homes of today. Take worship out of all homes, and we shall have a constantly diminishing church attendance and look in vain for the coming generation of ministers. Keep it in the home, and the future of organized Christianity is safe.

2. THE PRESENT DECLINE IN THE PRACTISE OF FAMILY WORSHIP is undoubted. It is a lamentable fact that the custom belongs almost exclusively to the past. We may have gilded other days in our religious imaginations, universalizing " The Cotter's Saturday Night " into a picture of every fireside, and so turning history into fiction. The golden age of worship is not behind us but before. But the fact remains that today in city and in country the practise has well-nigh vanished; and save among our ministers and families of the old school — and not all of these are among the virtuous — one looks in vain for the modern counterpart of Burns' exquisite picture.

The usual explanations offered are the industrial stress, with the resultant hurry in the morning and weariness in the evening; the varying appointments, which render leisure for all at the same time difficult to arrange; the lack of support by public opinion and popular custom; the ignorance of fathers and mothers with respect to the tools of worship, and their fumbling and bungling with

them when they take them into their hands; the embarrassment and unreality experienced in what seems to be an awkward and abnormal situation, and the desert of dulness and formalism into which the rivulet of their devotion either sinks below the surface or vanishes as a cloud beyond the hills of sand. Above all is the fact that by many the need of family worship is not felt nor is its value appreciated. The members do not worship because they have no worship to express.

The way of escape is apparent. Households can usually find a time for any act which they regard as of vital importance. Ten minutes earlier rising in the morning, ten quiet minutes out of the program for the evening, will furnish the opportunity. Ignorance of the ways and means can be cured by study. There are books dealing with family worship in general, admirably chosen and well arranged selections for daily readings, collections of prayers which may either be used as they are or taken as models in devotion. The talents of parents for leading worship differ widely; but there is no valid reason why any father who will train and prepare himself for it should stumble and find himself humiliated before his children. If leader and household bring nothing to worship, they will naturally get nothing — sometimes worse than nothing — out of it. But ill-chosen Bible readings, with no explanations or applications, mumbled and lifeless prayers, empty-headed and empty-hearted singing are not inevitable. They are inexcusable.

Family worship expresses itself in three main forms: (a) grace at table; (b) the bedside prayers of the children; (c) general family prayers.

3. GRACE AT TABLE. Here are the bounties of nature. What could be more natural than to thank God, recognizing Him as the wise and generous Giver of all good things?

With this should also be expressed the recognition of God as the welcome and unseen Guest.

> " Come, be our guest, O Lord of good,
> And bless to us Thy gift of food"

will serve as an example. Such prayers at the table express the devotional life normally and naturally. They help to invest the meal with a wholesome but not burdensome sense of the sacramental, and lift it above the mere process of feeding. They tend to hallow what should be hours of happiest fellowship, to clothe the routine of daily life with its true divinity, to lift the table-talk above the level of gossip and squabbling, and to bring God into the friendship of the home.

In character the grace should be short, simple and sincere, and not stilted or over-pious. It is no place for the elaborate and ornate, for cataloguing the attributes of deity, or for making the family confession. Above all, it must be saved from formalism, as well as from descending to what has been called " the purely dietetic grace," some pious variation of Shakespeare's

> " Now good digestion wait on appetite,
> And health on both."

Usually the blessing may be asked by the father or mother. Often it is wise to allow the children to do it in turn. Perhaps most helpful is the custom of having all say the grace together, varying the forms for the different meals, and adopting new ones from time to time. No thoughtlessness, or mumbling, or hurrying should be tolerated. The quiet moment preceding the first words, the dignity and sincerity and beauty which invest the rite, all demand attention. It is not necessary to ask the blessing on all occasions. Wherever the observance is difficult, or the formalities of some

social gathering make it unnatural, the rite will be strengthened more in the breach than in the observance. No timidity or false shame should interfere with it; but it should never become a kind of table fetish or a mere formal preliminary to the feast.

4. THE BEDSIDE PRAYERS OF THE CHILDREN. Teaching children to pray is dealt with in another chapter. Here it is necessary only to add some practical suggestions.

(1) *Evening prayer.* The evening has its advantages and disadvantages. The children's bodies are weary, their minds sluggish, and the natural tendency is to tumble into bed. On the other hand, it is the normal time to review the day's deeds and experiences, conscious of God's presence, and to set the moods and thoughts, which are formative powers even during sleep. Whether the child that wakes in the morning will be loving and pure and unselfish and inclined to worship, will depend partly upon the kind of child who goes to bed. Wise parents will guard the hour with reverent appreciation. Quiet, grateful thoughts; a child's simple talk with the great unseen Father and Friend; true penitence and the promise of loyalty — these should characterize the petitions and send the little worshiper into dreamland with a cleansed and gladdened heart.

(2) *Morning prayer.* In the morning the difficulties are those of late rising, hunger, and the impulse to hurry into the activities of the day. But where the prerequisites of an awakened body, an alert mind, and leisure are given, the time is fraught with tremendous possibilities. Souls may be wakened and cleansed and invigorated and clothed as well as bodies. The mood may be set, the higher nature fed, preparation made for trials and temptations, and work begun as the friend and fellow laborer of God.

(3) *Method.* Usually some preparation for the prayer-time should be made, rather than to allow the children to

hurry from their tooth-brushes to their devotions. In the evening review the day with them; in the morning prepare them for it. Remind them of certain elements which should enter into their prayers, and help to create the mood and strengthen the impulse. See to it that the act is a happy one and not an irksome task. In the earliest years it will be wise for the parents to pray with the children, teaching them the art and enveloping them in the prayer spirit. The free prayer of the father or mother may be followed by some memorized form, in which all join, closing with a brief silent time, in which the child should be encouraged to formulate his own simple prayer. Kneeling may not be necessary, but it is certainly helpful. Posture not only helps to express the mood but to create it. A child must be made to understand that he can pray at any time and in any posture, and be encouraged to do so. But the times when he deliberately kneels will further rather than interfere with his readiness to turn to God in moments of special need, after the fashion of Nehemiah.

5. General family prayers. These should be conducted in a manner reverent but quite informal, keeping the worship simple, natural, and free from all sense of repression and strain. Study and tact on the part of the leader will make the exercise practical, interesting and joyous. All that is said should be couched in language intelligible to each member of the group, and connected with the ordinary affairs of life. This does not mean " talking down " to the children, the kind of pious baby-ism in which some well-intentioned people indulge, both in public and in private, and which is so despised and resented by any healthy-minded child. Brevity is necessary. Prosiness and prolixity will kill any service; and the father who prolongs his petitions, or attempts to preach to an unwilling congregation, or who indulges in what has been de-

scribed as "getting behind the mercy-seat and throwing stones," uttering pointed personal criticisms and accusations in the form of prayer, need not wonder if his flock becomes restless and unhappy, growing up with the firm resolution that their homes shall never be afflicted with family prayers.

So far as possible, all should share in the details of worship. The children may take turn in reading the selections. These need not always be from the Bible. Jesus condensed a whole treatise on ethics into the story of the Good Samaritan, and taught the heart of his theology in the Parable of the Prodigal. A similar devotional use may be made of tales from the lives of missionaries and heroes of the faith; of selections from the poets, such as Whittier's "Eternal Goodness," Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and Wordsworth's "Happy Warrior"; and even of current events in which the hand of God is manifested. In the Bible readings various editions may well be used for the sake of variety and freshness. Psalms and great religious poems may be memorized and repeated in unison.

Variety is desirable. Special days, like birthdays, Church festivals and holidays, may suggest new ways of conducting the worship. The realm of art is a rich one for devotional purposes. Great masterpieces, such as Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" and "The Transfiguration"; statues like Michaelangelo's "David"; incarnations of religious moods of which Millet's "Angelus" is an example; religious allegories in art, such as Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World," which Ruskin called "the most perfect instance of expressional purpose that the world has yet produced"; and photographs of the Holy Land may be utilized. If the worship find expression in hymns, all that is said in the chapter on "Worship in Music and Song" becomes applicable.

The leader's prayer need not contain more than a dozen sentences, though for these some careful preparation should be made. At first it may be wise to write out such prayers, whether or not any attempt is made to memorize them. The practise will at least lift one above the common faults of aimlessness, dulness and floundering. Some form of common prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer or the collect for the day, may well be added. Nothing, however, will be so effective as the simple, sincere petitions of the leader, which the children recognize as his own and theirs, even though these are haltingly expressed.

6. THE HELP OF TEACHER AND PASTOR is needed. Rarely, if ever, will they have opportunity to share in the family worship. But they can urge its need upon thoughtless parents, lend them the most helpful books, introduce it by word and story into sermon and instruction hour on Sunday, and during walks and talks with the children make the expression of the devotional life in the home seem both natural and desirable. Working together with tact and wisdom, minister and teacher can do much to establish family worship in the busiest of modern homes.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. How essential do you deem family worship to be for the maintenance of religion and the perpetuation of the Christian Church? Give full reasons for your answer.
2. Give reasons for the present decline in the custom of family worship.
3. If it is desirable that the custom be reinstated, how practically shall we go about it?
4. Discuss the value and methods of grace at table.
5. Discuss the times and methods of bedside prayer on the part of the children.
6. Discuss the problem of a time for general family prayers, and methods which may be followed.

7. Should set forms of prayer be used in family worship, or extemporaneous prayers? Give reasons for your answer.

8. What can the teacher and the pastor do to help to establish family worship in the homes of the church?

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A brief list will be found at the close of Lesson II. In addition to these, such collections of rhymed prayers as John Martin's "Prayers for Little Men and Women" will be found helpful. These, however, are recommended less for direct use by boys and girls than as suggestions for the topics, language and spirit of children's prayers.

LESSON IX

CHURCH WORSHIP

1. In worship the church and its children are mutually dependent.

(1) *The church needs the child.* His presence makes the congregation a normal life group, where family units are merged into the social unit of the community. To the leader in worship he is an inspiration to be concrete, interesting, vital; and a warning against the prolixity and dulness and lack of touch with life, which tax the patience and deaden the spirits even of the saints. Most important is the probability that if the child is lost to religion, the man will be lost also. If in the life of the church no place is made for the boy — a place which he understands, and loves, and in which he functions — the chances are that no place will be taken by the man.

(2) *The child needs the church.* It offers him external aids, living examples, and adequate training. It affords him the contagion and reinforcement of a larger social fellowship.

2. The worship of the church affords both stimulus and power to children.

(1) *The very architecture of the church* is an embodiment of worship. The suggestion of the spire, the spaciousness and beauty of the interior, the messages of pictured glass, the symbolism of font and communion table and altar — all speak to the child and help his own soul to utter itself. Not that we should rely too much upon such extraneous aids. Not all are privileged to have them, and saints have been produced without them. Moreover, care must be taken not to identify æsthetic enjoyment with genuine

religious emotion. But the relation of environment to mood is not to be treated lightly. The holiness of beauty may well be used to awaken the beauty of holiness. It is a misfortune that so many churches are hindrances rather than aids to worship — barn-like structures, ugly and cold and gloomy, with too many reminiscences of theaters and town-halls.

(2) *The church service affords the child helpful companionships in worship.* Here are earnest folk, some of them leaders in the community, to whom he looks up with a child's admiration, bowing before one infinitely higher and better, and seeking those supremely valuable possessions, which only the great Giver of every good and perfect gift can bestow. Memories of noble lives, now members of the choir invisible, breathe upon him.

(3) *The service furnishes instruction in worship,* not only by word and example, but by the rites of the church, which sway his soul even before he understands them. As soon as possible he should be helped to enter into all its forms and ceremonies intelligently and reverently. The significance of posture, why we bow the head and close the eyes, why we rise or kneel; the meaning of the rite of Baptism, which he will often witness; the spiritual message and solemn vows involved in the Lord's Supper — all these should be interpreted to him.

(4) *Through the services of the church worship is organized for expression in social service,* through which true worship must ever utter itself if it is to live. The child comes under the mighty power of collective suggestion. It helps him to make connection between the worship of God and the life of the great world about him.

3. The adaptation of church worship to children.

(1) *Children must be furnished with an adequate motive for worship.* It is not enough to compel them to go to

church, wise and necessary at times as this may be. They ought to know why they are going, what they are to do, and what benefits are to be given or gained. The boy's impatient, "Oh, what's the use?" is a question worth answering. One service which he attends with alert mind and open heart is worth a hundred to which he is dragged as an unwilling victim, through which he sits with dogged stoicism, and from which he emerges with a sense of relief.

The heart of this motive should be the possibility and practise of genuine worship. Good fellowship, joy in music, new knowledge, inspiration for better living are associated with this and may all be enlisted. But the great thing is the "deliberate and intelligent effort to make explicit to consciousness the supreme fact of religion, namely, the reality and nearness of God, to the end that God may be able to do for us, in us, and through us, and so for the world at large, what he desires."[1]

(2) *The service must be interpreted to children.* What is the use of the prelude? Is it an intrinsic part of the worship? Is the anthem a concert number, or are we to worship through it? Is the minister praying instead of the people, or are they to pray with him? Is the offering merely a begging nuisance, skilfully set so as to make it difficult if not impossible to keep one's money, or is it one of the supreme acts of worship, the symbolic consecration and dedication of self and property and time and all to God? Every part of the service, every act in the ritual, must be interpreted and made effective, until in it and through it the child is enabled to commune with God.

(3) *The service must be made interesting to children.* Without that key, the doors to their intellects and emotions and wills remain locked and barred. The character of the

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[1] W. A. Brown: *Worship*, p. 4.

language employed, the vividness and picturesqueness with which the idea is conceived, the vigor and power of the presentation, will all affect this.

(4) *The service must concern the child's life vitally.* His temper and habits, his language and books, his treatment of the weak and disagreeable, his ideals and the objects of his ambitions — these are the things which must be touched upon and transformed. The life of the home, the work of the school, the ethics of his play should bear the impress of that hour in the church. The service must involve more than the abstract elements of religion; unmistakably and concretely and fascinatingly it must involve the child.

(5) *The external conditions of the service must be conducive to worship.* The length should not be excessive. There are time limits beyond which attention is difficult. The seats should be comfortable. It would tax a martyr to worship, if the pews were so shaped as to make his back ache, and so high that his feet could not touch the floor. There may lie unsuspected supplies of grace in a cushion or a stool. The air should be kept fresh. A proper degree of temperature, light, and an unobstructed view of the minister are other seeming trifles, all of which, however, conduce to the possibility and effectiveness of worship.

4. Persons upon whom responsibility rests.

(1) *Parents* have the largest opportunity and the strongest influence. They are the ones to arouse and develop the instinct of worship, to exercise it in the home, to motivate and make effective the act of going to church. Family prayers of the right sort during the week will be of immeasurable helpfulness. A child can no more develop a worshipful nature by exercising it one hour on one day in seven than he can develop a strong body by exercising it one hour on one day in seven.

Before church the child should be prepared for worship. It is not enough to see that he has clean face and hands, and is dressed, often much to his self-consciousness and discomfort, in unusual clothes. What of the condition of his mind and heart? The object of church-going can be suggested and impressed, not with the dulness of a lecture or the piousness of a tract, but with tact and grace. Certain experiences may be recalled for which he and the family may well give thanks, certain deeds calling for confession and penitence, certain aims and ideals which need clarifying and invigorating. These may be brought home in some quiet personal word, or be suggested without moralizing in the conversation at the breakfast table. If the day is a special one, or if the topic of the sermon has been announced, there is a chance for preparation and for interesting family discussion.

At church the family should sit together. Sitting regularly in the family pew begets in a child the sense of being at home. It is the especial place in the church where he belongs, from which he is missed, and where he feels natural and at ease. If the members of the family are early for the service, as it is wise to be, the Psalm and hymns may be read and made vital by some word or story. The child then knows what is coming, and can take part with more understanding and joy. Intelligent interest, happy anticipation, appreciation of the materials of worship should be furthered in every way, that the boy and girl may find co-operation and helpfulness in what is often a difficult task.

After church, or on Sunday evening, the thought of the hour may be discussed and applied. What effect should it have on the home life, on school work, on personal conduct, on events taking place in the world? Is any resultant deed demanded? Without this the worship and sermon of the morning may become as ephemeral as an April cloud.

(2) *The minister* of today is expected to understand the religion of childhood, which so many of his forbears either outraged or ignored. If he has been well trained, he will know how to make the service compact in form, full of spirit, and attractive to the younger members of the congregation. He will speak the language and enter into the thoughts and experiences of childhood. In the service of worship he will know how to call forth and express the child's gratitude, reverence and loyalty. In his prayer he will make conscious contact with the young as well as with the older members of the congregation. He will study the art of giving out hymns, so as to make them interesting and vital. In his sermons he will illustrate the value of a point of contact, the importance of the first sentence, the art of illustration, the power of the right use of humor as well as of pathos. No wise leader of worship aims exclusively at adults or is content if graybeards nod approval. He will have failed lamentably if he does not win the cooperation and approval of the child.

(3) *The individual member of the congregation* also has a part. The cordiality of his welcome will be effective, as well as his ability to correct or to endure the fault of restlessness rather than to scold and glower. The sincerity and beauty of his worship will be contagious. If his reverence is purely external, his attention wandering, his participation lukewarm or entirely wanting, and his life in the community out of harmony with the gospel which his lips in the forms of worship profess, he can hope to have very little effect, and that for the most part harmful, upon the life of the keenly observant child.

(4) *The teacher's time and opportunity* are comparatively limited. But he, too, in the worship of the Sunday school, in class meetings and personal conversations, can interpret the church service and make it more effective. He can

help parents, arousing them to their duty, and indicating ways and means of accomplishing it. He should keep in close touch with the pastor, letting him know the results of the services, and keeping him apprised of the needs and deeds of his boys and girls.

5. VARIOUS PLANS have been devised for encouraging church attendance on the part of children. Some have found it practicable to combine the services of the church and Sunday school, thus enlisting children in the former and adults in the latter. The danger is that both services may thus be maimed. Go-to-Church Bands, Leagues of Worshiping Children, and the like, stimulate attendance by covenants, records and, in some cases, rewards. Such plans are not enough in themselves. They do not involve an adaptation of the church service to meet the needs of children. The danger is that the outward forms may be observed and the rewards gained without real growth in the power of worship. Junior Congregations have been organized, practically duplicating the organization of the church, with juvenile officers and services of their own. These services, however, are necessarily less rich and impressive than the regular worship of the church and may easily degenerate into mere parodies.

The best plan, in general, is to have a children's sermon or story at some early point in the regular morning service. Such a sermon not only recognizes the presence of the children and helps them to feel that the service is for them; it interests the adults, puts the preacher into touch with his audience, and helps him to preach more simply and directly to the grown-ups. In many churches the youngest children withdraw after the children's sermon, and go to their class-rooms for instruction, stories or handwork. All in the Junior department or above, however, should remain for the whole of the service.

The great essential is that the child should feel his oneness with the rest of the worshiping congregation. He should not simply get something in the hour of worship; he should be made conscious that he is, with others, contributing something. He should come away with a sense of proprietorship as well as of pleasure and profit.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why does the church need the children, not simply for sake of its future, but for sake of the present quality of its life and worship?
2. Why do children need the church?
3. What would be the probable results were children to be trained in religion at home and in Sunday school, without attendance at church worship?
4. How can you make children want to go to church?
5. What can parents do to prepare their children for attendance at church worship, and to render the service meaningful to them?
6. What are the duties of the minister in connection with the church attendance of children?
7. What are the duties of the Sunday-school teacher in this connection?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the "merger" service which combines Sunday school and church into one? Of the Go-to-Church Band plan? Of the Junior Congregation plan?
9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a children's sermon in the early part of the regular church service? What should be some of the characteristics of such a sermon? Would you call it a juvenile sermon, a sermonette, or a children's sermon? Why?

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LESSON X

THE GOAL OF DEVOTIONAL TRAINING

The goal at which we aim in training children to worship is that we may help them to become men and women (1) of sound individual habits of devotion, (2) members of the Christian Church and regular participators in its worship,(3) who have committed their lives to God through Jesus Christ and have experienced His redeeming, regenerating grace, (4) whose worship issues in lives of Christlike service, doing God's work in the world, (5) and who have begun so to know God through worship as to have entered, here and now, upon eternal life.

1. We seek to establish them in INDIVIDUAL HABITS OF DEVOTION which are sound and permanent. A man's habits should be his best friends. However undevout the soul, worship is so natural, so helpful, so necessary, that in supreme moments it bursts forth in ejaculations such as "Thank God!" "God help me!" "God forgive me!" and the like. This sporadic uplift of mind and heart to God we seek through training to make habitual, intelligent and independent. Only so can its full power and joy be appropriated and proved.

One's individual worship should be *systematic and regular.* Exercise taken now and then is helpful; but it is only when it becomes a regular habit that it produces the exultant vigor of full health and strength. So with worship. Its momentary expressions may serve to quicken the soul and to point the way to spiritual heights. But the achievement of full-grown spiritual manhood is possible only to him who lives in daily fellowship with the Father.

Individual habits of worship should be *intelligent,* lifted

above all formalism and superstition. Some go through the forms of worship regularly without experiencing its fruits. Others practise it as a kind of charm, a bit of pious magic, with mistaken notions and false aims.

These habits, moreover, should be *independent.* They should not rely upon the support of popular custom or environmental aids. They should command rather than bow to the words and actions of others as well as personal whims and moods. The dormitory scene in "Tom Brown at Rugby" illustrates both how easy it is to drift away from worship through the tendency while in Rome to do as the Romans do, and how strong the power of independent habit is, not only to hold Arthur but to awaken Tom and to transform Rome.

2. We seek to induct children into THE WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH. Individual habit needs social reinforcement. It is not enough that they be trained to understand and appreciate the worship of others. They must be more than auditors and spectators. We should equip them to share in public worship with heart and soul and strength and mind. One phase of the modern amusement problem has been diagnosed as "spectatoritis." Something like this is the trouble with some congregations. Too many, instead of obeying the words of the Psalmist,

> "Let the people praise thee, O God,
> Let all the people praise thee,"

are content to look on and listen while one man in the pulpit and four people in the choir serve as substitutes for them. Our boys and girls must be saved from this practise of worshiping by proxy. No doubt something is gained simply by being in church, just as some recreation may be found in watching a ball game. But the full realization belongs only to him who participates. The rewards of

worship are bestowed only on the soul which actively communes with God.

3. We seek to bring the child, in due time, definitely TO COMMIT HIS LIFE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, AND TO EXPERIENCE HIS REDEEMING, REGENERATING GRACE. At some time or other in adolescent years, there is likely to come a spiritual crisis. The Spirit of God is manifested with power, and the child becomes conscious that some permanent decision for life must be made. Shall I consecrate myself to God and His kingdom, or to myself and to my own kingdom? Shall I accept Christ as the Master and Saviour of my life, and obey His command, "Follow Me"; or shall I attempt to save my own life, with whatever content I may fill that phrase, and go where I please? Are love and truth and righteousness to be the inspiration and aim of all my endeavors, or shall I pamper appetite, grasp greedily at the whims and suggestions of unbridled passions and unholy ambitions, and seek the immediate satisfaction of my desires, whether or not these lead me into lovelessness and falsehood and sin?

The normal response of the child, whose earlier training has been what it should be, is the experience and decision called conversion. The experience is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit; the decision is the response of the awakened child of God. Both are necessary. It is impossible to tell where one leaves off and the other begins. The classic description is that given in Paul's injunction: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." The child becomes conscious of a Power not himself working within him and about him. He sees clearly that toward which his individual habits of worship as well as the services of the church have been tending. He puts himself publicly and whole-heartedly

in the ranks of the followers of Jesus. For himself the goal of his ambition is full-grown Christian manhood. For the world all his faculties and powers are consecrated to that Kingdom in which the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are realized. Worship blossoms into a supreme act. Customs practised under the tutelage of others during childhood culminate in a life inspired and empowered by the Spirit of God.

The nature of this crisis will be determined by various circumstances — age, temperament, home-training and previous moral conduct. In some it is marked and sudden; in others it is as gradual and imperceptible as the coming of the spring. The result in any case is the birth from above, the conscious and definite experience of regeneration. Through it God is enabled to "pour His life and energy into human souls, even as the sun can flood the world with light and resident forces, or as the sea can send its refreshing tides into all the bays and inlets of the coast, or as the atmosphere can pour its life-giving supplies into the fountains of the blood in the meeting-place of the lungs; or, better, as the mother fuses her spirit into the spirit of the responsive child, and lays her mind on him until he believes in her belief."[1] Toward this goal all the worship of childhood should tend; from it should spring the wealth of thoughts and emotions, which develop and ennoble youth, and fructify and glorify the life of the world.

4. Naturally and necessarily the divine life thus entered into by the individual must also be realized in society. Worship should direct and vitalize THE WHOLE PROGRAM OF ACTIVE CHRISTIAN SERVICE. Prayer must put itself into harness until the salvation of the individual has been crowned by the achievement of the kingdom of God. The worshiper, who on Sunday chanted, "O give thanks unto

[1] Rufus M. Jones; *The Inner Life*. p. 99.

the Lord, for He is good," must on Monday express that gratitude in grateful deeds. The worker, who prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread," must help to answer that prayer either by raising wheat or by earning his right to it. The reverence at the altar, if real, will reveal itself in reverence for God's laws and God's children. The repentance of the closet will be manifested in confession and reparation and righteous living.

This is natural for children, whose lives and interests center less in thought and emotion than in activity. A child is so made that he must literally "work out his own salvation," not think it out merely. Parents and teachers should see to it that the services of worship in the church and Sunday school are supplemented and realized in deeds that serve on the other days of the week. What a child prays, he should practise; what he sings, he should live.

This brings about *the normal alternation of work and worship*. No man can worship all the time. To be sure, the spirit of worship should permeate and glorify all his living. There is a very true sense in which Paul's exhortation to "pray without ceasing" is not only ideal but practical. Life itself becomes a prayer. All our working and playing and loving are carried on with a sense of God in the background of consciousness. Our wills are one with His, our thoughts revert to Him, our activities are directed by Him. In this sense worship, like breathing, should be coextensive with life.

But when the monk attempts to worship constantly, he fails. To keep perpetually praying is impossible and undesirable. Conscious worship is the means by which we renew depleted spiritual energies. Once the reservoirs of power are full, we need to direct them into the ordinary channels of life. In worship we prepare for work; in work we earn the right to worship. Each is incomplete

without the other. At times each is merged into the other. But the natural relation is an alternation, each supplementing the other in the program of a well-balanced life.

No one can judge as to just when and just how much another soul should worship. It is like eating and playing and sleeping. We find out by experiment. The divine law, justified by the experience of centuries, is the setting apart of one day in seven on whose program worship should be given a controlling part. Practically, humanity cannot live at its highest and best without Sunday. And a true Sunday means more than rest, recreation and home-life for the bread-winner; it means that social worship through which all gain rest and recreation and home-life for the soul.

The program for Monday, also, has need of a place for worship. We can no more relegate worship to one day in seven than we can concentrate eating and sleeping on one day in seven. Whenever the springs of life begin to fail, whenever our whole being faints and clamors for ethical and spiritual renewal, we shall follow the Master into the quiet of a place apart for the uplift and invigoration of conscious communion with God. Morning and evening may be the best times for this. Quite as needful, however, will be those stray moments on the street, in the home, amid the distractions of school and office and factory, when quick as thought the mind turns to God, refers life's tasks and problems to Him, and draws upon Him for illumination, guidance and strength.

5. THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF TRAINING IN WORSHIP IS ETERNAL LIFE. Through the daily practise of the presence of God one may begin the life that is life indeed right here and now. By means of Christian living and Christian labor, which are a more true expression of prayer than mere words, however devout, the kingdom of God may come on earth even as in heaven. Ours is a religion of *salvation*,

individual and social. To know God, as Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to know Him, is to enter upon life eternal.

It is your privilege, as parent or teacher, to help bring the soul of a child into possession of his birthright of immortality in sonship to God. We have studied together some ways whereby you may plan to train the devotional life of your children to this blessed end. Need it be added that all methods are doomed to fail unless they are made vital by the influence of your own character and practise? Is your own devotional life all that it can be and ought to be? If not, begin with yourself. The counsels of this book are for you as well as for your children.

QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why should one's worship be made a matter of regular and systematic habit?
2. Give examples, from your own experience or from observation, of how one's habit of worship may be influenced by surrounding customs or conditions.
3. What do you understand by conversion? Is the process alike in all persons? Give reasons for your answer.
4. What do you understand by regeneration? What did Jesus mean when he said, " Ye must be born again " ?
5. What is meant by the alternation of work and worship? What did Paul mean by his counsel to " Pray without ceasing " ?
6. Should all persons combine work and worship in the same proportions? What is the function of the Christian Lord's Day?
7. Is it possible to worship God on the street, or while busied in office or factory? Give reasons for your answer.
8. What is the relation of the teacher's or parent's own devotional life to the training of the devotional life of the child?

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